Chas Thomas.

WILSON'S TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND. HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGINATIVE.

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WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE GUIDWIFE OF COLDINGHAM;

OR,

THE SURPRISE OF FAST CASTLE.

NEAR where St. Abb stretches, in massive strength, into the sea, still terrible, even in ruins, may be seen the remains of Fast Castle, one of the most interesting in its history—as it is the most fearfully romantic in its situation—of all the mouldering strongholds which are still to be traced among the Borders, like monuments of war, crumbling into nothingness beneath the silent but destroying touch of time. After the death of the bluff Harry the Eighth of England, who had long kept many of the corruptible amongst the Scottish nobility and gentry in his pay, the ambitious Somerset, succeeding to the office of guardian of the young king, speedily, under the name of Protector, acquired an authority nothing inferior to the power of an absolute monarch. He had not long held the reins of government when he rendered it evident, that it was a part of his ambition to subdue Scotland, or the better portion of it, into a mere province of England.

The then governor of Scotland, Hamilton, Earl of Arran,

(for Queen Mary was but a child,) was not ignorant of the designs of Somerset, and every preparation was made to repel him on his crossing the Borders. It was drawing towards evening on the first of September, 1547, when the Protector, at the head of an army of eighteen thousand men, arrived at Berwick; and nearly at the same instant, while the gloaming yet lay light and thin upon the sea, a fleet, consisting of thirty-four vessels of war, thirty transports, and a galley, were observed sailing round Emmanuel's head—the most eastern point of Holy Island. On the moment that the fleet was perceived, St. Abb's lighted up its fires, throwing a long line of light along the darkening sea, from the black shore to the far horizon: and scarce had the first flame of its alarm-fire waved in the wind, till the Dow Hill repeated the fiery signal; and, in a few minutes, Domilaw, Dumprender, and Arthur's Seat, exhibited tops of fire as the night fell down on them, bearing the tidings, as if lightnings flying on different courses revealed them, through Berwickshire and the Lothians, and enabling Roxburgshire and Fife to read the tale; while Binning's Craig, repeating the telegraphic fire, startled the burghers of Linlithgow on the one hand, and on the other aroused the men of Lanarkshire.

Before, therefore, the vessels had arrived in the bay, or the Protector's army had encamped in the Magdalen Fields around Berwick—Berwickshire, Roxburgh, the Lothians, Fife, and Lanark were in arms. The cry from the hills and in the glens was, "The enemy is come—the English—to arms!" The shepherd drove his flocks to the inaccessible places in the mountains; he threw down his crook and grasped his spear.

At the same time that Somerset crossed the Borders on the east, the Earl of Lennox, who, from disappointed ambition, had proved false to his country, entered it at the head of another English army to the west.

But I mean not to write a history of Somerset's invasion —of the plausible proposals which he made, and which were rejected—nor of the advantages which the Scots, through recklessness or want of discipline, flung away, and of the disasters which followed. All the places of strength upon the Borders fell into his hands, and he garrisoned them from his army and set governors over them. The first place of his attack was Fast Castle; in which, after taking possession of it, he left a governor and strong garrison, composed of English troops and foreign mercenaries, causing also the people around, for their own safety, to take to him an oath of fealty, renouncing their allegiance to the young queen. But while there were many who obeyed his command with reluctance, there were others who chose rather to endanger or forfeit their lives and property than comply with it. It had not, however, been two years in the hands of the English, when, by a daring and desperate act of courage, it was wrested from them.

A decree went forth from the English governor of the castle, commanding them to bring into it, from time to time, all necessary provisions for the use of the garrison, for which they should receive broad money in return; for Somerset and his chief officers—the Lord Grey and others —had caused it to be published, that they considered the inhabitants of that part of Scotland as the subjects of young Edward, in common with themselves, and not as a people with whom they were at war, or from whom their soldiers might collect provisions and pay them with the sword.

The English, indeed, paid liberally for whatsoever they received; and there was policy in their so doing, for there were not a few who preferred lucre to their country, and the effigy of a prince upon a coin to allegiance to their lawful monarch. But, while such obeyed with alacrity the command of the governor of Fast Castle, to bring

provisions to his garrison, there were many others who acquiesced in it reluctantly, and only obeyed from the consciousness that disobedience would be the price of their lives.

At this period there dwelt in Coldingham a widow, named Madge Gordon. She was a tall and powerful woman, and her years might be a little below fifty. Daily she indulged in invectives against the English, and spoke contemptuously of the spirit of her countrymen in submitting to the mandate of the governor of Fast Castle. She had two cows and more than a score of poultry; but she declared that she would spill the milk of the one upon the ground every day, and throw the eggs of the other over the cliffs, rather than that either the one or the other should be taken through the gates of the castle while an English garrison held it.

Often, therefore, as Madge beheld her neighbours carrying their baskets on their arms, their creels or sacks upon their backs, or driving their horses, laden with provisions, towards the castle, her wrath would rise against them, and she was wont to exclaim—

"O ye slaves!—ye base loun-hearted beasts o' burden! hoo lang will ye boo before the hand that strikes ye, or kiss the foot that tramples on ye? Throw doun the provisions, and gang hame and bring what they better deserve; for, if ye will gie them bread, feed them on the point o' yer faithers' spears."

Some laughed as Madge spoke; but her words sank deep into the hearts of others; and a few answered—

"Ye are as daft as ever, Madge; but a haveral woman's tongue is nae scandal, and ye ken that the governor winna tak cognizance o' ye."

"Me ken or care for him, ye spiritless coofs, ye!" she replied; "gae tell him that Madge Gordon defies him and a' his men, as she despises you, and wad shake the dirt frae

her shoon at baith the ane and the other o' ye. Shame fa' ye, ye degenerate, mongrel race! for, if ye had ae drap o' the bluid o' the men in yer veins wha bled wi' Wallace and wi' Bruce, before the sun gaed doun, the flag o' bonny Scotland wad wave frae the castle towers."

"Mother! mother!" said an interesting-looking girl of nineteen, who had come to the door as the voice of Madge waxed louder and more bitter—"dinna talk foolishly—ye will bring us a' into trouble."

"Trouble! ye silly lassie, ye!" rejoined Madge; "these are times indeed to talk o' the like o' us being brought into trouble, when our puir bluiding country is groaning beneath the yoke o' an enemy, and we see them harrying us not only oot o' hoose and ha', but even those that should be our protectors oot o' their manhood! See," added she, "do ye see wha yon is, skulking as far as he can get frae our door wi' the weel-filled sack upon his shouthers? It is yer ain dearie, Florence Wilson! O the betrayer o' his country!—He's a coward, Janet, like the rest o' them, and shall ne'er ca' ye his wife while I live to ca' ye daughter."

"O mother!" added the maiden, in a low and agitated voice—"what could poor Florence do? It isna wi' a man body as it is wi' the like o' us. If he didna do as the lave do, he wad be informed against, and he maun obey or die!"

"Let him die, then, as a man, as a Scotchman!" said the stern guidwife of Coldingham.

Florence Wilson, of whom Madge had spoken, was a young man of three or four and twenty, and who then held, as his fathers had done before him, sheep lands under the house of Home. He was one of those who obeyed reluctantly the command of the governor to bring provisions to the garrison; and, until the day on which Madge beheld him with the sack upon his shoulders, he had resisted doing so. But traitors had whispered the tale of his stubbornness and discontent in the castle; and, in order to save

himself and his flocks, he that day took a part of his substance to the garrison. He had long been the accepted of Janet Gordon; and the troubles of the times alone prevented them, as the phrase went, from "commencing house together." He well knew the fierce and daring patriotism of his intended mother-in-law, and he took a circuitous route, in order to avoid passing her door, laden with a burden of provisions for the enemy. But, as has been told, she perceived him.

In the evening, Florence paid his nightly visit to Janet.

"Out! out! ye traitor!" cried Madge, as she beheld him crossing her threshold; "the shadow of a coward shall ne'er fall on my floor while I hae a hand to prevent it."

"I'm nae coward, guidwife," retorted Florence indignantly.

"Nae coward!" she rejoined; "what are ye, then? Did not I, this very day, wi' my ain een, behold ye skulking, and carrying provisions to the enemy!"

"Ye might," said Florence; "but ae man canna tak a castle, nor drive frae it five hundred enemies. Bide ye yet. Foolhardy courage isna manhood; and, had mair prudence and caution, and less confidence, been exercised by our army last year, we wouldna hae this day to mourn owre the battle o' Pinkie. I tell ye, therefore, again, just bide ye yet."

"Come in, Florence," said Madge; "draw in a seat and sit doun, and tell me what ye mean."

"Hoots, Florence," said Janet, in a tone partaking of reproach and alarm, "are ye gaun to be as daft as my mother? What matters it to us wha's king or wha's queen? —it will be lang or either the ane or the ither o' them do onything for us. When ye see lords and gentry in the pay o' England, and takin its part, what can the like o' you or my mother do?"

"Do! ye chicken-hearted trembler at yer ain shadow!"

interrupted Madge; "though somewhat past its best, I hae an arm as strong and healthy as the best o' them, and the blood that runs in it is as guid as the proudest o' them."

Now, the maiden name of Madge was Home; and when her pride was touched, it was her habit to run over the genealogical tree of her father's family, which she could illustrate upon her fingers, beginning on all occasions—"I am, and so is every Home in Berwickshire, descended frae the Saxon kings o' England and the first Earls o' Northumberland." Thus did she run on, tracing their descent from Crinan, chief of the Saxons in the north of England, to Maldredus, his son, who married Algatha, daughter of Uthred, prince of Northumberland, and granddaughter of Ethelrid, king of England; and from Maldredus to his son Cospatrick, of whose power William the Conqueror became jealous, and who was, therefore, forced to fly into Scotland in the year 1071, where Malcolm Canmore bestowed on him the manor of Dunbar, and many baronies in Berwickshire. Thus did she notice three other Cospatricks, famous and mighty men in their day, each succeeding Cospatrick the son of his predecessor; and after them a Waldreve, and a Patrick, whose son, William, marrying his cousin, he obtained with her the lands of Home, and, assuming the name, they became the founders of the clan. From the offspring of the cousin, the male of whom took the name of Sir William Home, and from him through eleven other successors, down to George, the fourth Lord Home, who had fallen while repelling the invasion of Somerset a few months before, did Madge trace the roots, shoots, and branches of her family, carrying it back through a period of more than six hundred years; and she glowed, therefore, with true aristocratic indignation at the remark of her daughter to Florence—"What can the like o' you or my mother do?" And she concluded her description of

her genealogical tree by saying—"Talk noo the like o' yer mother, hizzy!"

"Aweel, mother," said Janet, mildly—"that may a' be; but there is nae cause for you fleeing into a tift upon the matter, for nae harm was meant. I only dinna wish Florence to be putting his life in jeopardy for neither end nor purpose. I'm sure I wish that oor nobility would keep to their bargain, and allow the queen, though she is but a lassie yet, to be married to young king Edward, and then we might hae peace in the land, and ither folk would be married as weel as them."

"We shall be married, Janet, my doo," said Florence, gazing on her tenderly—"only ye bide a wee."

Now, it must not be thought that Janet loved her country less than did her mother or her betrothed husband; but, while the land of blue mountains was dear to her heart, Florence Wilson was yet more dear; and it was only because they were associated with thoughts of him that they became as a living thing, as a voice and as music in her bosom. For, whence comes our fondness for the woods, the mountains, the rivers of nativity, but from the fond remembrances which their associations conjure up, and the visions which they recall to the memory of those who were dear to us, but who are now far from us, or with the dead? We may have seen more stupendous mountains, nobler rivers, and more stately woods—but they were not *ours!* They were not the mountains, the rivers, and the woods, by which we played in childhood, formed first friendships, or breathed love's tender tale in the ear of her who was beautiful as the young moon or the evening star, which hung over us like smiles of heaven; nor were they the mountains, the woods, and the rivers, near which our kindred, the flesh of our flesh, and the bone of our bone, SLEEP! But I digress.

"Tell me, Florence," said Madge, "what mean ye by

'bide a wee?' Is there a concerted project amongst ony o' ye, an' are ye waiting for an opportunity to carry it into effect?"

"No," answered he, "I canna say as how we hae devised ony practicable scheme o' owrecoming our oppressors as yet; but there are hundreds o' us ready to draw our swords an' strike, on the slightest chance o' success offering —and the chance may come."

"An' amongst the hundreds o' hands ye speak o'," returned Madge, "is there no a single head that can plot an' devise a plan to owrecome an' drive our persecutors frae the castle?"

"I doot it—at least I hae ne'er heard ony feasible-like plan proposed," said Florence, sorrowfully.

Madge sat thoughtful for a few minutes, her chin resting on her hand. At length she inquired—"When go ye back to sell provisions to them again?"

"This day week," was the reply.

"Then I shall tak my basket wi' eggs an' butter, an' gae wi' ye," answered Madge.

"O mother! what are ye sayin?" cried Janet. "Ye maun gang nae sic gate. I ken yer temper would flare up the moment ye heard a word spoken against Scotland, or a jibe broken on it; an' there is nae tellin' what might be the consequence."

"Leave baith the action an' the consequence to me, Janet, my woman," said the patriotic mother; "as I brew, I will drink. But ye hae naething to fear; I will be as mim in the castle as ye wad be if gieing Florence yer hand in the kirk."

The day on which the people were again to carry provisions to the garrison in Fast Castle arrived; and to the surprize of every one, Madge, with a laden basket on each arm, mingled amongst them. Many marvelled, and the more mercenary said—

"Ay, ay!—Madge likes to turn the penny as weel as ither folk. The English will hae guid luck if ony o' them get a bargain oot o' her baskets."

She, therefore, went to the castle, bearing provisions with the rest of the peasantry; but, under pretence of disposing of her goods to the best advantage, she went through and around the castle, and quitted it not until she had ascertained where were its strongest, where its weakest points of defence, and in what manner it was guarded.

When, therefore, Florence Wilson again visited her dwelling, she addressed him, saying—

"Noo, I hae seen oor enemies i' the heart o' their strength; an' I hae a word to say to ye that will try yer courage, and the courage o' the hunders o' guid men an' true that ye hae spoken o' as only bidin' their time to strike. Noo, is it yer opinion that, between Dunglass an' Eyemouth, ye could gather a hundred men willing an' ready to draw the sword for Scotland's right, an' to drive the invaders frae Fast Castle, if a feasible plan were laid before them?"

"I hae nae doot o't," replied he.

"Doots winna do," said she; "will ye try it?"

"Yes," said he.

"Florence, ye *shall* be my son," added she, taking his hand—"I see there is spirit in ye yet."

"Mother," said Janet earnestly, "what dangerous errand is this ye wad set him upon?—what do ye think it could matter to me wha was governor o' Fast Castle, if Florence should meet his death in the attempt?"

"Wheesht! ye silly lassie, ye," replied her mother; "had I no borne ye, I wad hae said that he hadna a drap o' my bluid i' yer veins. What is't that ye fear? If they'll abide by my counsel, though it may try their courage, oor purpose shall be accomplished wi' but little scaith."

"Neither fret nor fear, dear," said Florence, addressing Janet; "I hae a hand to defend my head, an' a guid sword to guard baith." Then turning to her mother, he added—"An' what may be yer plan, that I may communicate it to them that I ken to be zealous in oor country's cause?"

"Were I to tell ye noo," said she, "that ye might communicate it to them, before we were ready to put it into execution, the story wad spread frae the Tweed to John o' Groat's, and frae St. Abb's to the Solway, and our designs be prevented. Na, lad, my scheme maun be laid before a the true men that can be gathered together at the same moment, an' within a few hours o' its being put in execution. Do ye ken the dark copse aboon Houndwood, where there is a narrow and crooked opening through the tangled trees, but leading to a bit o' bonny green sward, where a thousand men might encamp unobserved?"

"I do," answered Florence.

"And think ye that ye could assemble the hundred men ye speak o' there, on this night fortnight?"

"I will try," replied he.

"Try, then," added she, "and I will meet ye there before the new moon sink behind the Lammermoors."

It was a few days after this that Madge was summoned to the village of Home, to attend the funeral of a relative; and while she was yet there, the castle of her ancestors was daringly wrested from the hands of the Protector's troops, by an aged kinsman of her own, and a handful of armed men. The gallant deed fired her zeal more keenly, and strengthened her resolution to wrest Fast Castle from the hands of the invaders. She had been detained at Home until the day on which Florence Wilson was to assemble the stout-hearted and trust-worthy in the copse above Houndwood. Her kindred would have detained her longer; but she resisted their entreaties, and took leave of them

saying, that "her bit lassie, Janet, would be growing irksome wi' being left alane, an' that, at ony rate, she had business on hand that couldna be delayed."

She proceeded direct to the place of rendezvous, without going onwards to her own house; and, as she drew near the narrow opening which led to the green space in the centre of the dark copse, the young moon was sinking behind the hills. As she drew cautiously forward she heard the sound of voices, which gradually became audible.

"Well, Florence," said one, "what are ye waiting for? Where is the grand project that ye was to lay before us?"

"Florence," said others, "let us proceed to business. It is gaun to be very dark, and ye will remember we have to gang as far as the Peaths* the night yet."

Florence answered as one perplexed, but in his wonted words—"Hae patience—bide a wee;" and added, in a sort of soliloquy, but loud enough to be overheard by his companions—"She promised to be here before the moon gaed down upon the Lammermoors."

"Wha did?—wha promised to be here?" inquired half a dozen voices.

"I did!" cried Madge, proudly, as she issued from the narrow aperture in the copse, and her tall figure was revealed by the fading moonbeams. With a stately step, she walked into the midst of them, and gazed round as though the blood and dignity of all the Homes had been centred in her own person.

"Weel, Madge," inquired they, "and, since ye are come, for what hae ye brought us here?"

"To try," added she, "whether, inheriting, as ye do, yer faithers' bluid, ye also inherit their spirit—to see whether ye hae the manhood to break the yoke o' yer oppressors, or if ye hae the courage to follow the example which the men o' Home set ye the other nicht."

* The Pease Bridge.

"What have they done?" inquired Florence.

"Hearken," said she, "ane and a' o' ye, and I will tell ye; for, wi' my ain een, I beheld a sicht that was as joyfu' to me as the sight o' a sealed pardon to a condemned criminal. Ye weel ken that, for near twa years, the English have held Home Castle, just as they still hold Fast Castle, beside us. Now, it was the other nicht, and just as the grey gloam was darkening the towers, that an auld kinsman o' mine, o' the name o' Home, scaled the walls where they were highest, strongest, and least guarded; thirty gallant countrymen had accompanied him to their foot, but before they could follow his example, he was perceived by a sentinel, wha shouted out—'To arms!—to arms!' 'Cower, lads, cower!' said my auld kinsman, in a sort o' half whisper, to his followers; and he again descended the wall, and they lay down, with their swords in their hands, behind some whin bushes at the foot o' the battlements. There was running, clanking, and shouting through the castle for a time; but, as naething like the presence o' an enemy was either seen or heard, the sentry that had raised the alarm was laughed at, and some gaed back to their beds, and others to their wine. But, after about two hours, and when a'thing was again quiet, my kinsman and his followers climbed the walls, and, rushing frae sentinel to sentinel, they owrecam ane after anither before they could gie the alarm to the garrison in the castle; and, bursting into it, shouted—'Hurra!—Scotland and Home for ever!' Panic seized the garrison; some started frae their sleep—others reeled frae their cups—some grasped their arms—others ran, they knew not where—but terror struck the hearts o' ane and a'; and still, as the cry, 'Scotland and Home for ever!' rang frae room to room, and was echoed through the lang high galleries, it seemed like the shouting o' a thousand men; and, within ten minutes, every man in the garrison was made prisoner or put to the sword! And

noo, neebors, what my kinsman and a handfu' o' countrymen did for the deliverance o' the Castle o' Home, can ye not do for Fast Castle, or will ye not—and so drive every invader oot o' Berwickshire?"

"I dinna mean to say, Madge," answered one, who appeared to be the most influential personage amongst her auditors—"I dinna mean to say but that your relation and his comrades hae performed a most noble and gallant exploit—one that renders them worthy o' being held in everlasting remembrance by their countrymen—and glad would I be if we could this night do the same for Fast Castle. But, woman, the thing is impossible; the cases are not parallel. It mightna be a difficult matter to scale the highest part o' the walls o' Home Castle, and ladders could easily be got for that purpose; but, at Fast Castle, wi' the draw-brig up, and the dark, deep, terrible chasm between you and the walls, like the bottomless gulf between time and eternity!—I say, again, for my part, the thing is impossible. Wha has strength o' head, even for a moment, to look doun frae the dark and dizzy height o' the Wolf's Crag?—and wha could think o' scaling it? Even if it had been possible, the stoutest heart that ever beat in a bosom would, wi' the sickening horror o' its owner's situation, before he was half-way up, be dead as the rocks that would dash him to pieces as he fell! Na, na, I should hae been glad to lend a helping and a willing hand to ony practicable plan, but it would be madness to throw away our lives where there couldna be the slightest possibility o' success."

"Listen," said Madge; "I ken what is possible, and what is impossible, as weel as ony o' ye. I meant that ye should tak for example the dauntless spirit o' my kinsman and the men o' Home, and no their manner o' entering the castle. But, if yer hearts beat as their hearts did, before this hour the morn's nicht, the invaders will be driven frae

Fast Castle. In the morning we are ordered to take provisions to the garrison. I shall be wi' ye, and in the front o' ye. But, though my left arm carries a basket, beneath my cloak shall be hidden the bit sword which my guidman wore in the wars against King Harry; and, as I reach the last sentinel—'Now, lads! now for Scotland and our Queen!' I shall cry; and wha dare follow my example?"

"I dare! I will!" said Florence Wilson, "and be at yer side to strike doun the sentinel; and sure am I that there isna a man here that winna do or die, and drive oor enemies frae the castle, or leave his body within its wa's for them to cast into the sea. Every man o' us, the morn, will enter the castle wi' arms concealed about him, and hae them ready to draw and strike at a moment's warning. Ye canny say, freends, but that this is a feasible plan, and ye winna be outdone in bravery by a woman. Do ye agree to it?"

There were cries of—"Yes, Florence, yes!—every man o' us!"—and "It is an excellent plan—it is only a pity that it hadna been thocht o' suner," resounded on all sides; but "Better late than never," said others.

"Come round me, then," said Madge; and they formed a circle around her. "Ye swear now," she continued, "in the presence o' Him who see'th through the darkness o' night and searcheth the heart, that nane o' ye will betray to oor enemies what we hae this nicht determined on; but that every man o' ye will, the morn, though at the price o' his life, do yer utmost to deliver oor groaning country frae the yoke o' its invaders and oppressors! This ye swear?"

And they bowed their heads around her.

"Awa, then," added she, "ilka man to his ain hoose, and get his weapons in readiness." And, leaving the copse, they proceeded in various directions across the desolate

moor. But Florence Wilson accompanied Madge to her dwelling; and, as they went, she said—

"Florence, if ye act as weel the morn as ye hae spoken this nicht, the morn shall my dochter, Janet, be yer wife, wi' a fu' purse for her portion that neither o' ye kens aboot."

He pressed her hand in the fulness of his heart; but she added—

"Na, na, Florence, I'm no a person that cares aboot a fuss being made for the sake o' gratitude—thank me wi' deeds. Remember I have said—a' depends on yer conduct the morn."

When they entered the house, poor Janet was weeping, because of her mother's absence, for she had expected her for two days; and her apprehensions were not removed when she saw her in the company of Florence, who, although her destined husband, and who, though he had long been in the habit of visiting her daily, had called but once during her mother's absence, and then he was sad and spoke little. She saw that her parent had prevailed on him to undertake some desperate project, and she wept for his sake.

When he arose to depart, she rose also and accompanied him to the door.

"Florence," said she, tenderly, "you and my mother hae some secret between ye, which ye winna communicate to me."

"A' that is a secret between us, said he, "is, that she consents that the morn ye shall be my winsome bride, if ye be willing, as I'm sure ye are; and that is nae secret that I wad keep frae ye; but I didna wish to put ye aboot by mentioning it before her."

Janet blushed, and again added—

"But there is something mair between ye than that, Florence, and why should ye hide it frae me?"

"Dear me, hinny!" said he, "I wonder that ye should be sae apprehensive. There is nae secret between yer mother an' me that isna weel-kenned to every ane in the country-side. But just ye hae patience—bide a wee—wait only till the morn; and, when I come to lead ye afore the minister, I'll tell ye a'thing then."

"An' wherefore no tell me the noo, Florence?" said she. "I am sure that there is something brewing, an' a dangerous something too. Daur ye no trust me? Ye may think me a weak an' silly creature; but, if I am not just so rash and outspoken as my mother, try me if I haena as stout a heart when there is a necessity for showing it."

"Weel, Janet, dear," said Florence, "I winna conceal frae ye that there is something brewing—but what that something is I am not at liberty to tell. I am bound by an oath not to speak o't, and so are a hunder others, as weel as me. But the morn it will be in my power to tell ye a'. Noo, just be ye contented, and get ready for our wedding."

"And my mother kens," Janet was proceeding to say, when her mother's voice was heard, crying from the house—

"Come in, Janet—what are ye doing oot there in the cauld?—ye hae been lang enough wi' Florence the nicht—but the morn's nicht ye may speak to him as lang as ye like. Sae come in, lassie."

As the reader may suppose, Madge was not one whose commands required to be uttered twice; and, with a troubled heart, Janet bade Florence "good-night," and returned to the cottage.

It was a little after sunrise on the following day, when a body of more than a hundred peasantry, agreeably to the command of the governor, appeared before the castle, laden with provisions. Some of them had the stores which they had brought upon the backs of horses, but which they

placed upon their own shoulders as they approached the bridge. Amongst them were fishermen from Eyemouth and Coldingham, shepherds from the hills with slaughtered sheep, millers, and the cultivators of the patches of arable ground beyond the moor. With them, also, were a few women carrying eggs, butter, cheese, and poultry; and at the head of the procession (for the narrowness of the draw-bridge over the frightful chasm, beyond which the castle stood, caused the company to assume the form of a procession as they entered the walls) was Madge Gordon, and her intended son-in-law, Florence Wilson.

The drawbridge had been let down to them; the last of the burden-bearers had crossed it; and Madge had reached the farthest sentinel, when suddenly dropping her basket, out from beneath her grey cloak gleamed the sword of her dead husband!

"Now, lads!—now for Scotland and our Queen!" she exclaimed, and as she spoke, the sword in her hand pierced the body of the sentinel. At the same instant every man cast his burden to the ground, a hundred hidden swords were revealed, and every sentinel was overpowered.

"Forward, lads! forward!" shouted Madge.

"Forward!" cried Florence Wilson, with his sword in his hand, leading the way. They rushed into the interior of the castle; they divided into bands. Some placed themselves before the arsenal where arms were kept, while others rushed from room to room, making prisoners of those of the garrison who yielded willingly, and showing no quarter to those who resisted. Many sought safety in flight, some flying half-naked, aroused from morning dreams after a night's carouse, and almost all fled without weapons of defence. The effect upon the garrison was as if a thunderbolt had burst in the midst of them. Within half an hour, Fast Castle was in the hands of the peasantry, and

the entire soldiery who had defended it had either fled, were slain, or made prisoners.

Besides striking the first blow, Madge had not permitted the sword of her late husband to remain idle in her hands during the conflict. And, as the conquerors gathered round Florence Wilson, to acknowledge to him that to his counsel, presence of mind, and courage, as their leader, in the midst of the confusion that prevailed, they owed their victory, and the deliverance of the east of Berwickshire from its invaders, Madge pressed forward, and, presenting him her husband's sword, said—

"Tak this, my son, and keep it—it was the sword o' a brave man, and to a brave man I gie it—and this night shall ye be my son indeed."

"Thank ye, mother——mother!" said Florence. And as he spoke a faint smile crossed his features.

But scarce had he taken the sword in his hand, ere a voice was heard, crying—

"Where is he?—where shall I find him?—does he live?—where is my mother?"

"Here, love!—here! It is my Janet!" cried Florence; but his voice seemed to fail him as he spoke.

"Come here, my bairn," cried her mother, "and in the presence of these witnesses receive a hand that ye may be proud o'."

As part of the garrison fled through Coldingham, Janet had heard of the surprise by which the castle had been taken, and ran towards it to gather tidings of her mother and affianced husband; for she now knew the secret which they would not reveal to her.

As she rushed forward, the crowd that surrounded Florence gave way, and, as he moved forward to meet her, it was observed that he shook or staggered as he went; but it was thought no more of; and when she fell upon his bosom, and her mother took their hands and pressed

them together, the multitude burst into a shout and blessed them. He strove to speak—he muttered the word "Janet!" but his arms fell from her neck, and he sank as lifeless on the ground.

"Florence! my Florence!—he is wounded—murdered!" cried the maiden, and she flung herself beside him on the ground.

Madge and the spectators endeavoured to raise him; but his eyes were closed; and, as he gasped, they with difficulty could understand the words he strove to utter—"Water—water!"

He had, indeed, been wounded—mortally wounded—but he spoke not of it. They raised him in their arms and carried him to an apartment in the castle; but, ere they reached it, the spirit of Florence Wilson had fled.

Poor Janet clung to his lifeless body. She now cried—"Florence!—Florence!—we shall be married to-night?—yes!—yes!—I have everything ready!" And again she spoke bitter words to her mother, and said that she had murdered her Florence. The spectators lifted her from his body, and Madge stood as one on whom affliction, in the midst of her triumph, had fallen as a palsy, depriving her of speech and action.

"My poor bereaved bairn!" she at length exclaimed; and she took her daughter in her arms and kissed her—"ye hae indeed cause to mourn, for Florence was a noble lad!—but, oh, dinna say it was my doing, hinny!—dinna wyte yer mother!—will ye no, Janet? It is a great comfort that Florence has died like a hero."

But Janet never was herself again. She beeame, as their neighbours said, a poor, melancholy, maundering creature, going about talking of her Florence and the surprise of Fast Castle, and ever ending her story—"But I maun awa hame and get ready, for Florence and I are to be married the nicht."

Madge followed her, mourning, wheresoever she went, bearing with and soothing all her humours. But she had not long to bear them; for, within two years, Janet was laid by the side of Florence Wilson, in Coldingham kirk-yard; and, before another winter howled over their peaceful graves, Madge lay at rest beside them.

THE SURGEON'S TALES.

THE SOMNAMBULIST OF REDCLEUGH.

It is now many years since I visited a patient, at the distance of some sixty miles from the proper circuit of my practice. On one occasion, when with him, I received a letter from a gentleman, who subscribed himself as one of the trustees of Mr. Bernard* of Redcleugh, requesting me to visit, on my return home, the widow of that gentleman, who still resided in the old mansion, and whose mind had received a shock from some domestic affliction, any allusion to which was, for some reason, very specially reserved. I may remark, that I believe I owed this application to some opinions I was known to entertain on the subject of that species of insanity produced by moral causes, and which is to be carefully distinguished from the diathetic mania, so often accompanied by pathological changes in the brain. It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader, that we have always a better chance for a cure in the one case than in the other, inasmuch indeed as, in the first, we have merely functional derangement; in the second, organic change. I always maintain there is no interest about insane people, except to the man of science; and even he very soon gets to that "ass's bridge," on the other side of which Nature, as the genius of occult things, stands with a satirical smile on her face, as she sees the proud savans toppling over into the Lethe of sheer ignorance, and getting drowned for their insane curiosity. In the asylum in France, mentioned by

* I find it more convenient, in this tale, to give names to my personages, in place of initials.

De Vayer, the inmates enjoyed exceedingly the imputed madness of the visiting physician. The same play is acted in the world all throughout. Our insanity has only a little more method in it—and while I avoid any description of the madness of Mrs. Bernard, I will have to set forth a story, which, leading to that madness, has in it apparently as much of insanity as may be found in the ravings of a maniac.

I obeyed the call to Redcleugh, where I found the *res domi* in a peculiar position. There were few inmates in the large old house. Besides the invalid herself, there was an old cook and a butler, by name Francis, who had been in the family for many years, and whose garrulity was supplied from an inexhaustible fountain—the fate and fortunes of the Bernards. My patient was a lovely woman in body—a maniac in mind. Her affliction had suddenly shot up into her brain, and left untouched the lineaments of her beauty, excepting the expression of the eye, which had become nervous and furtive, oscillating between the extreme of softness and the intensity of ferocity. Having been cautioned by Francis to make no allusion to her husband or to certain children, whom he named, or to the word "book," and many other things, I contented myself, in the first instance, with a general examination of her symptoms; and, as it was late before I arrived, I resolved upon remaining all night, which would enable me to see her again in the morning. I had supper served up to me by Francis, who brought me some wine which had been in the house for fifty years, and told me stories of the family, extending back twice that period. Sometimes these old legends would be interrupted for a moment by a shrill cry, coming from a source which we both knew. All else in this house was under the spell of Angerana, the genius of silence. There is something peculiar in the sound of a common voice in a large house, filled with memorials of

those who had lived in it, and yet with no living sounds to break the dull heavy air, which seems to thicken by not being moved. It appeared as if I had been suddenly thrown into a region of romance, but my experiences were not pleasant. I wished to escape to my own professional thoughts again, and desired to go to bed.

I was accordingly, not without some efforts on the part of my entertainer to prolong his stories, ushered into my bed-room—a large apartment, hung with pictures, some very old, and some very new. Francis put the candle down, and left me. It was not long before I was undressed and under the bed-clothes; but not being sure about sleeping, I left the candle burning, intending to rise and extinguish it when I found myself more inclined to fall over into the rest I required. The old legends began to pass through my mind, and I was engrossed with the spirit of the past. Time makes poetry out of very common things, and then we are to remember, what we do not often think of, that the most ordinary life cannot be passed without encountering some incidents which smack of the romantic. Nay, every man's life, as a bright gleam thrown on the dark abyss which separates him from eternity, is all through a romance, in the midst of that greater one, seen by us only as shadows—the negatives of some positives, perhaps, witnessed by eyes on the other side. I have always been tinged by something of the spirit of old Bruno, that dreamer, whose most real realities were no other than umbery forms—flakes of shadow—cast off by a central light from the real objects, of which we are the mere shadowy representatives. All the breathing, throbbing, active beings, who for two hundred years had run along these narrow passages of the old house, and peered into half-open doors, or out of the small skew-topped windows —danced, sang, laughed and wept—died, and been carried out—were to each other as such umbery things; and I,

the present subsisting shadow, received them all into my living microcosm, where, as in a mirror, they existed again, scarcely less shadowy than before.

Somehow or another I could not get to sleep; not that I had any fears: these were out of the question with me. My vigils were attributable to a fancy, wrought upon by the recitals of the old butler, illustrated by the very concrete things which had been used by the personages he described. There were the chairs they sat on, the beds they slept on, the piano they played on, all as they had been left. It was impossible for me to conceive that there was yet no connection between these things and the old family. The pictures, too, were still there, in the various rooms, some of them in my bed room. The light of my eyes seemed to have disenchanted these silent staring personages. They came forth and occupied themselves as they had been wont before they became pictures. The chair of the first of the late Mr. Bernard's two wives—that "angel whose look was an eternal smile," as Francis poetically described her—appeared to have the power of drawing her down into it; but then the attraction was not less for the second wife, "whose fate was a terrible mystery;" and thus would I get confused. Then, to which of these did the little dark fellow on the south wall belong—he who seemed to have been scorched by too strong a sun—and the girl beside them, who looked as if she had been blanched by too bright a moon—which of the two was her mother?

At last I got out of bed, and rummaged for some stray volume to disenchant me out of the imaginary world of these Bernards. I drew out one or two drawers, which had been so long shut that they had lost their allegiance to the hand. I peered into an escritoire, and another old cabinet, which creaked and groaned at being disturbed by a hand not a Bernard's. All was empty. There was one

drawer which refused to come out to the full extent. Something seemed to be jammed between it and the back of the escritoire. Man is an enterprising animal; a little resistance sets his energies a-spring. I would not be baulked. I would know what the impediment was and work out the solution of the difficulty. By pulling hard the obstacle gave way. The drawer followed my hand, while my body fell back on the floor. Psha! some stray leaves of an old pamphlet fluttered about. I had dismembered the obstacle, and would now collect the fragments. I had got for my pains an old brochure, embellished by dreadful woodcuts, of the old Newgate calender style, and entitled, "The true and genuine history of the murderer, Jane Grierson, who poisoned her mistress, and thereby became the wife of her master, Josiah Temple;" the date 1742. I was no fancier of awful histories of murderers, yet I would read myself asleep amidst horrors rather than lie with my imagination in wakeful subjugation to the images of these eternal Bernards. Bernard still! on the top of the title page was written "Amelia Bernard." The charm was here too. Which of these fair creatures on the wall was the proprietor of this brochure? She had read it surely with care. She must have cherished it, or why identify it as her own? Perhaps she was a lover of old books; it could not be that she was a lover of cruel stories. Those eyes were made for throwing forth the lambent light of affection and love; how unlike to the staring blood-shot orbs of that Jane Grierson on that terrific woodcut! Yet, true to the nature of my species, at least my sex, I found in the grim pamphlet that inexpressible something which recommends coarse recitals of human depravity even to cultivated minds, and which consists probably in the conformity between the thing itself and the description of it; the rugged words, semblances of the rugged implements, and the savage actions of cruelty, address themselves

to the latent barbarism which lies as the lowest stratum of our many piled nature, and receive the savage response at the moment we blush for humanity. These dire images of the murderer's story were stronger than those of the Bernards—even of those lovely faces on the wall—and as the candle burned down, and the red wick grew up, I read and read on, how the cruel fiend did destroy while she fawned upon her victim; how that victim, overcome by the kindness of her enemy, praised her to her husband, who loved his wife to distraction; and how she, even in her devoted gratitude, recommended her murderer as her successor to the bed she lay on, and to those arms where she so often had enjoyed the pressure of his love. Nor was the recommendation ineffectual, for the said wicked Jane did become the wife of her victim's husband. The old horrid savagery of our criminal literature!—not yet abated—never to be abated—only glossed with tropes and figures more hideous than the plain narrative of blood.

It was a vain thought that I should read myself asleep among the terrible images suggested by my brochure. I was even more vigilant than before. Then, that Francis seemed never at rest; I heard him clambering up stairs, tramping along passages, shutting doors, speaking to himself, just as if all the actions of his prior life were being gone over again. I would have another visit, and another long narrative of some Bernard, whose picture was somewhere in a red or blue room, and who had been, as usual, with all those bearded individuals who hung on walls, either at the crusades under Peter the hermit, or at Flodden under James, or at Culloden under Charles. The clock struck, with a sound of grating rust, two; and—tramp, tramp—he trudged along the passage. The door opened, and in came my chronicler.

"Doctor, I saw your light," said he, "and you know it was always my duty, when the family were in their old

home here, to see that all the lights were out o' nights; aye ever after the east wing was burned down, through aunt Marjory's love of reading old romances. I hope I did not disturb you."

"No," replied I; "pray, Francis, I need not ask which of these two pictured beauties is Amelia, my patient? The likeness is good."

"Yes, there she is," said he, with a return of his old enthusiasm. "See her light locks and her blue eyes. She was the mother of that fair child. Don't you see the daughter in the mother and the mother in the daughter? But I cannot look long on these pictures. My heart fails and my head runs round. Look at the dark one. It was a terrible night that when she came to Redcleugh. My wife, who now lies in Deathscroft, down among the elms yonder, could not sleep for the screeching of the owls, as if every horned devil of them shouted woe! woe!—to the house of Redcleugh."

"Nonsense, Francis, omens—all nonsense," I said, interrupting him.

"So said I to Christy, just as you say, doctor. So say we all, every one of us, here and everywhere, always, just until we are pulled up at a jerk by some one of God's acts, when we see His finger pointed to the sign. You are not so old as I am, and have something to learn. Signs are made only when there are to be judgments, and judgments are not according to the common ways of heaven."

"What did Mr. Bernard do," asked I, "to bring upon him this judgment which appears to you to have been so fearful?"

"I am not in the secrets of God's ways with erring man," replied he. "But who can tell how my master got Lillah—that's her there with these dark eyes—his first wife? He had been away for years in the eastern countries, and he never wrote to any one that he was to bring

a wife with him. He brought her, amidst the storm of that fearful night, as if she had been a bird which he had rescued from the blast, so cowering and timid did she appear, always clinging to the laird, and looking at him with such beseeching eyes, and so unlike the women of our land—aye, for it was no northern sun lighted up these eyes; and as for a heathen faith imparting such gentleness, we could understand it no way. 'Twas all a hurry in Redcleugh as well as a sort of fright among us in the hall, every one whispering and wondering and questioning all to no end; for from that night we never knew more of her home or kindred, save that it was suspected she was a Circassian, and had left a noble home for the love she bore to master. Nor was she ever inquired after by her friends, except once, when a great eastern lord, as they said, came in a strange equipage to see her; but her change to a Christian shocked and angered him, so that high words rose and even reached our ears. He spoke of the faith she had forsworn, of Allah, and Mahomet, and the Koran, and she with tears responded Christ, the Saviour of all mankind, and his holy mother, and the cross of Calvary, so that he was made more angry; and then he spoke of Euphrosyne, her mother, as we thought, and again the tears rolled down these cheeks, as she clung to master and lay upon his neck, sobbing as if her heart would burst in the battle between the daughter and the wife. The stranger departed in anger, nor did he break his fast at Redcleugh, and many a day afterwards my young lady was in tears. 'Twas not long till she had that boy, whom she bore after many days of labour, with such pain that there was not a servant in the household did not look as if her own salvation depended upon the issue of that protracted struggle, so beloved was she, sir; so respected, so adored, so pitied; and as for Mr. Bernard, he was not himself—scarcely a man—and little wonder either, for his face was ever the attraction of her

eyes, and every look seemed to be watched by her as it all her happiness hung upon one of his smiles. Such doings were the wonder of us all in these parts; for you know we are rougher lovers in our cold land, and neither Christy, nor I, nor any of us, could understand how, on the face of this earth, there could be such affection—not a single drop of bitterness, not a ruffle on the smooth surface. Why, sir! did we not all, to satisfy our self-love, and our country's custom, call it very idolatry; but it was only a little envy which we, as it were, stole to ourselves, as a sweet unction to our sores, and when these were mended we loved her the more—nay, we could do nothing less; for even the devil's spleen couldn't detect an unevenness to hang upon it a suspicion against her."

"You are even more partial, Francis, than the painter," said I, "whom I have been charging with the fault of drawing upon his fancy to enable him to draw upon our credulity. She looks scarcely earthly."

"It's no use my description, sir. There are certain perfections we cannot attribute to God's creatures, because we suffer by the comparison. They say if there's not now and then a little anger there's a want. Oh! they will say God's image is not perfect if it have not a dash of our own evil in it. But experience is the mother of wonders as well as wisdom. Aye, sir, years of intercourse, even at a servant's distance, are worth more than your theories in these days."

"I suspect you have been in the library, Francis," said I; "you have opened books as well as bottles."

"Aye, sir, and *the book* of all books," replied he seriously; "but I hope I am not irreverend when I say that God may lead us to understand the first image in Eden by showing us sometimes something better here than what we can feel within our own hearts."

"Oh, I am not sceptical," said I; for I thought he was

pained by my remark, as if I doubted the qualities of his idol. "I believe all you have said of poor Lillah; and I love for the sake of my own matrimonial hopes to believe it, and more. But this idol died!"

"And died young, sir; perhaps because she was an idol," replied he. "They don't live long, sir, these creatures. They're like some of those bright winged things of the East, of which I have read, that exist only so long as the rose blooms on which they hang and live. But my lady Lillah never dwined—only there came a sadness over her, and master noticed that she began to cherish more than usual a minature which she carried about with her in her bosom—the figure of a lady—I have seen it often—so like herself you'd have said they were of the same family—'twas her mother, whom she called Euphrosyne. Even now I think I see her sitting in the rose arbour in the garden, with little Caleb by her side, gazing at that picture, so long, so thoughtfully, so pitifully that she seemed ready to weep; then she would, as if recalled by remorse, hug the child, and bid him run for his father; then Mr. Bernard would no sooner come than she would be so much more loving than was even her wont, that he seemed oppressed by the very fervour of her affection. Master was a quiet man, sir, and full of thought; and he soon saw that it would be good for my lady that she should have a companion. So the next thing we heard was that Amelia Temple, who had been governess over the muir at Abbey Field, and had been several times at Redcleuch with Mr. Orchardstoun's daughters, was engaged to come to us at the term. And she came. The wind did not whistle that night, nor the owl sound his horn; there was no omen, sir, and this will please you, though it does not shake me in my faith in heaven's warnings. You see Amelia there (holding up the candle, now nearly in the socket), I need not describe what the painter has copied so faithfully. But master did

not look kindly on that face, beautiful as it is, with that flashing eye and joyful expression. No, 'twas not till my lady grew distractedly fond of her that he looked sweetly on her (in the right way) for the love she gave to and got from her he loved the best of all the world. Oh! 'twas a beautiful sight, sir, those women. The rose of the west was a match for the lily of the east; then the pensive sweetness of the one, and the innocent light-heartedness of the other, met and mingled in a friendship without guile—a love without envy."

"Your last visit, Francis," I said, with a smile which I could not conceal, "must have been to the poets of the library."

"'Tis only truth, sir," resumed he. "When one sees a beautiful thing and feels the beauty—a privilege which is probably never denied at all times to any of God's creatures, and does not belong exclusively to the high born or the learned—he is a poet, be he a gauger or a butler. Aye, sir, a man may be a poet when his nose is right over the mouth of a bottle of burgundy, vintage '81."

"And not very poetical when he reflects that there is not a bottle left in the house," said I.

"He has still 'the pleasures of hope,'" rejoined Francis, with a little newborn moisture on his dry lips.

"Well," rejoined I, as I began to yawn from pure want of sleep, "there is at least little of either poetry or pleasure in 'hope deferred.' We will moisten these dry legends of the Bernards by a little of that burgundy of theirs now."

And this chronicler of the Bernards, as well as of something better than small beer, soon handed me a large glassful of this prince of wines.

"You will require all the benefit of that, sir," said he, "if I am to go on with my story."

"I'm not afraid," said I, listlessly, "after what I have read of the Grierson horrors."

The old man turned upon me a strange, wild look, rendered grotesque, if not ludicrous, by the effect of the glassful he had at that moment taken at my request. "Ah! you have heard—yet surely it is impossible. Was it not all between me and master? Who other could know of it? And the book! Oh, it was never found."

"I know nothing of these mysteries," replied I, not really understanding him, yet amazed at his appearance, as with long grey locks, shaking by his excitement, he kept staring at me in the dim light—for the candle was now out, and the fire burned red and dull. A little more conjuring would have brought all these pictures out into the room, and even as it was, I was beginning to transform my companion's shadow, as it lay on the arm chair behind him, into the very person itself of Lillah Bernard.

"Doctor," he said, gravely, "you must know the dark secret of this apartment."

"Nothing," replied I. "Go on; you have roused my curiosity. I know nothing of the Bernard's but what you have told me, and I request to know more. Go on, Francis."

He was not satisfied; continued to search, so far as he could, my face; but I wore him out.

"It's no use denying it, sir," he at length said, "but take your own way now;" then heaving a deep sigh, which might have been heard at the farthest end of the large room, so silent was all, he went on: "'Twas not to last, sir, all that happiness among those three, and little Caleb was the centre by which they were all joined. There's an enemy abroad to such heart-unions—unseen by all but God, who views him with the eye of anger, but lets him have his way for a season, and why we know it. Such little Edens grow up here and there among roses, as if to remind us of the one paradise which has gone, and to make us hope for the other which is to come; the old tragedy is

wrought within a circuit of a few feet and the reach of a few hearts. Oh! the old fiend triumphs with the old laugh on his dark cheek. Yes, sir, it is even so; there is nothing new with the devil, nor nothing old, nor will there be till his neck is fastened; but in this meanwhile of days and years of time, oh! how the soul pants as it looks through the clouds of sorrow which rise under his dark wing, and can see no light, save through the deep grave where lie those once beautiful things in corruption. 'Twas the beauty did it all, sir; the enemy cannot stand that loveliness; it makes him wild; he raves to get between the hearts and tear them so that the sanctified temples shall have no incense in them—nothing save the heavy odours of carrion. My lady Lillah one day felt a drowsiness come over her; it seemed, as Christy said, she felt only as if she had been inclined to sleep at an unusual time; she made no complaint, but Mr. Bernard observed something in her eye, and his watchfulness took alarm at every turn of her quiet manner. The drowsiness increased, and then it was observed that her pulse was slow and languid; it seemed to beat with fewer pulses every hour, and then master became more alarmed, and Amelia could not be away from her an instant. 'Twas strange the change which all of a sudden took place in Miss Temple; the gay laugh which Mr. Bernard used to encourage as a welcome light thrown on the soul of his wife was no more heard; a pitiful sympathy took its place, and, as Christy described it, looked like the light which we see so beautiful in the thin haze when the sun seems to melt all through it; it was the spirit of love, sir, dissolved in the shadows of grief. She hung over our dear lady as if she would have poured her own spirit into her to raise the still ebbing pulses. Nothing would stop that ebbing; the pulse would beat a little stronger after something given to her, but never quicker. Then these long silken eyelashes fell farther and farther down,

and the voice which had ever been all meekness, fell and fell into half whispers. At length she said something into master's ear; and he motioned to Miss Temple to go out for a little, but Christy remained. It was an awful moment, sir, when she made a sign that she would speak. 'Dear Edward,' she said, as she seemed to try to lift higher the drooping lids, "I will never more see the beautiful valley of the Kabarda, where stands my father's castle, with its gardens and roses of Shiraz. Oh, strange it seems to me, as all the things about me grow dim, the vision of those beloved scenes of my childhood wax brighter and brighter. I hear my father's voice crying Euphrosyne, and my mother's Lillah; my brothers and sisters take up the cry, and the mountaineers salute the favourite daughter of their chief. But she is here in this far land, and you, my best beloved, are there before her. Edward, I am going to die—soon—soon. I wished the dear Amelia away for a little—only a little—to be here again, and never to go more. She is faithful and loving and true. Edward; listen, my love: when I am gone, and you can forget me, take that dear girl into that place where you treasured me—into your affections, as your wife, Edward. The thought pleases me, for I think you will in her marry happiness, and my life seems to ebb away in the hope that you may be with her as you have been with me. Farewell; bring Caleb to kiss me before I go. There is a voice in my ears; it is Allah! Allah! but it is not listened to by the heart which whispers Jesus! the Mediator! the Saviour!'

"And with these words in her lips she died. O, sir, had you seen master—it was pitiful; and as for Amelia, who knew nothing of Lillah's words, she kept weeping till her eyes were inflamed. But the grief was everywhere throughout Redcleugh. It seemed as if some dreadful fate had befallen the whole household; gloom—gloom and sadness all about—in every face—in every heart; for never

was a daughter of Scotland beloved as was this dear lady of the far east; and I think somehow it was her having died so far away from the land of her kindred that softened the hearts of the people, and made them take on as I never saw servants take on for a mistress. 'Twould be a sharp eye, sir, that could distinguish now, in the vault of death's croft, the grey ashes of the beautiful Circassian from the dust of the Bernards—ay, or that of my poor Christian Dempster! It was now a long dark night to the house of Redcleugh, but the longest night is at last awakened by a sun in the morning. Mr. Bernard—always a moody man—scarcely opened his mouth for months and months. He was like a tree, that stands erect after being blasted—it may move by the winds, but the sun has no warmth for it, and there is nothing inside or at the root to give it life. They say that when a beloved wife dies, it is to the husband like the sun going away out of the firmanent, and that by-and-by she appears as a pale moon. Ay, sir; everything here is full of change. Mr. Bernard's moon had no waning in it, till he began to catch the echoes of Miss Amelia's voice as he wandered among the woods. It was the grey dawn of another sun, and the sun rose and rose, promising to gild the east again with its glory. The long burden was taken off Amelia. Her laugh began again to enliven Redcleugh, when she saw that Mr. Bernard was able to bear it. Then, sir, to bear it was to begin to love it, for it was the most infectious joyfulness that ever gladdened man's ears. The change, once begun, went on; he hung upon her voice as if it had been music. Every laugh shook him out of his long misery—it appeared to be to him like new life running along the nerves of the old dead tabernacle. So might one think of a man in the desert, as he looks down into the well, with the reflection of the sun in it; the water is drunk in living light; he shakes off all the horrors of his long-borne thirst, and rises renewed and glad. It

was pitiful—yea, it was pleasant too—to see how he followed her, gazed at her, listened to her, just as if he were always praying her, for mercy's sake, to give him some more of that medicine of his spirit. But, perhaps, he never would have thought of marrying Amelia, but for the parting words of Lillah. Christy, in her curious way, said that it was Lillah's moon that lighted him on to the rising of the new sun of Amelia; and as Christy wanted this new match, for the sake of saving, as she thought, the life of our master—it was strange enough that she saw no omens now save good ones; for was it not a good one, that every living thing about Redcleugh looked as joyful as Amelia herself? A wonderful work this world, sir! No magician could have worked a greater wonder than the scene of that marriage after the scene of that death-bed; yet it delighted me to see old Redcleugh all in a blaze again, and to go down into the old catacombs for the old-crusted vintages. Bless your heart!—it was just like the beginning of a new term of life to me. Then the memory of Lillah threw no shade over the scene of enjoyment, for we all knew that if her spirit were not hovering over her beloved Circassia, it would be here looking down on the fulfilment of her dying wish."

Here Francis drew breath, as if to prepare himself for something much more wonderful. It may easily be conceived that he had enlisted my sympathy, as well by the facts of his story, as his manner of telling it; and as one turns to the woodcut of a tale to get his impressions enlivened or verified, I felt a desire to see again, by the light of a candle, the face of the second wife. Francis gratified me by getting another candle, lighting it, and holding it up full in the face of Amelia.

"'Twas all well for Redcleugh for a time," he resumed, "save for me, who lost my dear Christy shortly after Mira was born. That's she there, sir, as I have told you, along-

side of my lady Amelia. When the grief was still heavy upon me, I was surprised by an almost sudden change in Mr. Bernard. I had gone up in the morning, expecting to find him in his dressing-room, which, as you see, enters as well from the lobby as by a door from the parlour, where breakfast was served. As I proceeded along the passage, I saw my lady hurrying away, with her handkerchief over her eyes, and her right hand held up, as if she were addressing Heaven; then deep sobs came from her, and a groan, which burst from the heart as she turned away into the west angle, sounded through the long lobbies and corridors. Master was not in his dressing-room. I heard his voice calling me from his bed-room, and I started at the sound, so unlike his utterance—so deep, heart-ridden, and agonized. On entering, I found him in his morning gown, sitting in that chair; his head thrown back, and his eyes fixed on my lady Lillah's portrait. It seemed, also, as if Amelia could not rest in the room in the west angle, where I thought I had seen her hurrying. Her foot was distinctly heard as she passed again along the lobby, which stretches along to the east tower, and passes this room, where my master and I were. A succession of groans followed, and died away as she receded. Mr. Bernard was too much occupied by some heart-stupefying thought to heed these sounds, and I stood before him not knowing what to say, far less what to do. At length he held up his hands, and placing one on my arm, said, in a voice which seemed the sound of one choking:—

"'Francis, you are an old friend, not a servant—not now at least. I trust you. The house of Redcleugh is doomed, nor shall a Bernard be ever again happy within its walls.'

"'What is wrong, master?' I inquired.

"'The core,' said he; 'the master's heart. I must go to the East again. There may be peace there for me; here,

in my father's house, there is none. But what shall become of Caleb and Mera?'

"My heart was too full to answer, and still Amelia's groans came from the passages, changing and changing, like the voice of a restless spirit. My master rose, and, folding his arms, paced along the room. His brow was knit tight as the muscles would draw. He seemed to contract his arms, as if to compress his heart—nor did a word escape from him. A thought seized me, that, like the older Bernards, he was under a fit of alienation. I made for the door, to seek my lady Amelia, and even in her agonies to consult her what was to be done. My master seized me sharply by the arm.

"'Whither going?' he said.

"'For my lady,' replied I.

"'For Amelia?' he said—'for the murderer of my Lillah, my first love, my angel?'

"I stood petrified, the word 'murderer' twittering on my shaking lips in fragments.

"'Yes,' he said, 'come in, come in—bolt that door; the other is already cared for. Francis, you know how my Lillah died; there was no disease—she slept away as a drugged victim. Now, listen. During this last night I was awoke by the restlessness of Amelia. I heard her leave my side, and rise from the bed'—that on which you are now lying.—'The rush-light burned on the mantelpiece, and I could see my wife, as she rose and began to pace the floor. I called out gently, "Amelia;" but got no answer. Her eyes, I saw, were fixed; and she moved her arms, as if she were addressing some imaginary being. I concluded she was sleep-walking, and immediately she began to speak, as she paced backwards and forwards. Part of what she said I lost, but I could join together enough for conviction.

"'She stood between me and my love,' she said, as she

stopped for a moment, laying one hand upon another, 'and it was necessary she should be put out of the way. A Grierson was never a waverer when a deed of blood was to be done.' 'How did you do it?' 'How did I do it? Poison! I made her sleep the long sleep, which the sun never breaks, nor the moon, nor time.' 'What poison did you say?' 'The sleepy poison. I made for her a draught, that I might draw the sweet life away; and'—

"'She stopped and laughed, as a sleep-walker laughs—hollow and distant.

"'And get into the *Temple* she occupied. Was you still kind to her while you watched the effect of your draught?' 'Was I, did you say? Yes, very kind. Oh! I nursed her dying spirit, that he might think me a ministering angel to his wife, whom I wanted to succeed. He was deceived. Yes, yes; simple fool, he was deceived. Ay, and not deceived, for I loved him.'

"She began to walk again to and fro, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly, then of a sudden turned and stood—'She was fair,' she continued, as she kept looking at the wall; but so am I. 'He got as good a bargain in me as in her.' Then she made devious movements, turning and returning, muttering to herself, but so thickly that I only caught words much disjointed — 'Remorse! — yes, yes!—no, no!—not till I am to be hanged; but that cannot be; no one saw me. Say nothing, nothing!—mix the draught—away to bed. 'Tis late, late! and I am cold.'

"She came to bed, Francis, cold and shivering. My mind began to regain some form of thinking, after having been tossed about by the effect of her horrible monologue, or rather part of a dialogue. The conviction was instant, unavoidable, and certain. I never thought of awakening her to question her, but lay distant from her as from a reptile. I slept none. In the morning she turned to kiss

me. I drew back my head in horror, and saw that she too was horrified at my manner. I bade her begone for a murderer, and, committed thus by my agony, told her she had confessed the whole story in a fit of somnambulism. Then she flew from me, crying she was innocent, tearing her hair in good acting—and there she walks by the passages under the sting of her guilt. Oh! she dare not face me, even were I to allow a meeting, which I wont. Francis, I am convinced.'"

"My master," continued Francis, addressing me as I lay listening and thinking of the old brochure, "was always moody, as I have said—ay, and crotchety; no one had any power to drive from him a settled opinion or resolution. After I had listened to him I said—

"'Master, permit me, your poor servant, to say that this is not evidence on which I would beat a dog.'"

"'I am convinced,' he replied sternly and unkindly, and he moved his hand as a sign that I should leave him. I retreated, grieved to the heart, for I knew master's nature. When I got to the top of the stair, I saw my lady beckoning me from the door of the library. I went to her.

"'Francis,' she said, as she shut the door, 'what is this? Has my husband told you anything?'

"'All,' I replied. 'He has recounted to me some strange words uttered by you in your sleep, from which he infers that you poisoned my lady Lillah.'

"'Repeat them—repeat them,' she said hurriedly.

"I did so, and when I mentioned the name Grierson, she seemed to brighten a little. O how she hung upon my words!

"'Francis,' she said, 'I may be saved. You may help me. Some nights ago I was occupied in reading the history of Jane Grierson—a little pamphlet which you will find in the drawer of the escritoire, in the dressing-room. There is the key. That story is the story I had recounted

in my sleep. Go get the book, and bring it to me. That will save me, and nothing but that will save me.'

"'God be praised,' I ejaculated, and then hurried with all speed to get the book. I searched the escritoire; it was not there. I examined other drawers with no better success. At length I returned to my lady, and reported my failure. Without saying a word she hurried away from me, rushed along the lobby, and entered the parlour opening into the dressing-room. Not doubting her word, and agitated by the hope of all being thus satisfactorily explained when the book should be got, I flew to my master's room through the door from the passage.

"'It is all explainable,' I cried, as I entered.

"'Indeed!' answered Mr. Bernard satirically.

"'My lady was some nights ago reading the story of Jane Grierson,' said I, 'and her sleep-walking conversation was only a repetition of the story.'

"'Grierson, Grierson!' cried my master, as he rose frantically, and placed his hand on his forehead. 'Yes, yes! she mentioned the word. I have never thought of that. Yes! yes! show me that book, and I shall be satisfied.'

"I ran immediately to the door leading to the dressing-room, where I heard my lady searching. Master had shut it. He opened it for me by the key which he held in his hand, and locked it as I passed out. It seemed he wanted no interview till the book should be got. Amelia was there, searching and searching, trembling and sighing.

"'What means this?' she ejaculated, as she proceeded —then paused. 'I must have placed it in the trunk, from whence I took it;' and she rushed away to the room where the trunks lay, which she had brought with her to Redcleugh.

"'Twas all in vain. That book could not be got, sir. That book was never found. No copy of it could be pro-

cured. The loss of that book was the ruin of the house of Redcleugh."

There it is, said I, holding up the tattered brochure to the wondering eyes of the old butler.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried the old man. "Yet not gracious—too late, too late!" and he staggered, like one who is drunk. Mr. Bernard is dead.

And Amelia is mad, said I, sorrowfully.

"Yes, mad," said he, as he still gazed on the brochure, and turned it over and over with trembling hands.

"But how did you come to get this," he inquired.

I told him, and he rose and hastened to the escritoire to examine it, and satisfy himself of the truth of my statement.

"When that book could not be found, sir," he resumed when he came back, "my master put his resolution into effect. He placed his children with Mr. Gordon, one of his trustees, executed a settlement, and went to the East. My lady Amelia never saw him from that morning, but he left word with me, that if the pamphlet was found in the house, he should be made acquainted with it through his trustee, Mr. Gordon. But, ah! sir, that never happened, in God's mysterious providence; and now my poor lady Amelia could receive no advantage from this proof of her innocence. I have heard from her own lips, before her reason gave way, that she was the grand-daughter of Jane Grierson and Mr. Temple, and that was the reason why she came to have this little book. The story haunted her, yet she read it; while, at the same time, she concealed her possession of it, and her connection with the parties.

Francis now left me, and if I had little inclination to sleep before, I had less now. All the strange incidents of the story seemed to revolve round myself; though my part in it seemed merely the result of chance, I appeared to myself somehow as a directly-appointed agent for working

out some design of Providence. Yet what I was required to do I did not know. I cogitated and recogitated, and came to no conclusion as to how I should act; only I saw no great benefit in the meantime in endeavouring to make any use of the pamphlet for the purpose of recovering the aberrant reason of the poor lady. At length I fell asleep, and next morning awoke to the strange recollections of what had occurred so shortly before. I saw Amelia again; she was depressed and moody; the fiend within her was dormant, but its weight pressed on the issues of thought, and her vacant stare told unutterable woe.

I left Redcleugh without much hope, intending to pay another visit shortly afterwards. About three or four days after reaching home, a letter came to me from Francis, inclosing one from Mr. Gordon, the latter of which contained the intelligence that there had been some mistake as to the report of Mr. Bernard's death. A gentleman of the same name had died at Aleppo, but the master of Redcleugh was still alive. A gleam of the sunshine of hope darted through my mind. The dark images of the story were illumined—even the figure of that poor lady enshrined in the gloom of sorrow became bright with lustrous, meaning, intelligent eyes. Within an hour I had a letter posted for Mr. Gordon, informing him of the finding of the pamphlet, and requesting him to send for Mr. Bernard by an express messenger.

In the meanwhile I visited Mrs. Bernard regularly, though the distance was much beyond my usual journeys. Some parts of the intelligence were broken to her through the medium of Francis, but without any marked result, if exacerbations were not more frequent, ending in deeper depression; as if a wild hope had risen and died away in the absence of anything visible or tangible to justify it to the erring but suspicious judgment of the victim of despair. Other preparations were made; the old servants recalled;

and Francis was glorying in the prospect of a restoration of the old ways, if not the very continuation of that broken happiness of which he was so full. At length Mr. Bernard arrived, along with Caleb and Mira. Mr. Gordon was along with them, and I was sent for. We were all assembled without Mrs. Bernard being aware of our presence in the house. I counselled caution, and Mira was introduced to the mother alone; but the child retreated under the fear of a scream which might betoken either joy or despair; nor did her mother ask for her again—a strange circumstance, and not of good omen; but we behoved to persevere, and Mr. Bernard himself, accompanied by Mr. Gordon and me, presented ourselves before her. Was there ever a meeting under such circumstances? The husband clasped the unconscious wife to his bosom. I stood to watch the effect of an act which I considered precipitate, if not imprudent. The moment she felt herself in the arms of her husband she struggled to release herself, uttered the loudest scream I ever heard from her, and fell in a swoon upon the floor. That swoon gave me hopes, for in confirmed madness we do not often find that moral causes working on the mind show any power over the body. When she recovered, and was placed in a chair, she panted for breath, like one choking; and waving her hands and grasping convulsively the clothes of those next to her, seemed as if she were testing the reality of all these appearances, as things new and wonderful and incredible. I then held out to her the pamphlet, in all its tattered condition. The effect was extraordinary. She clutched it with such an intensity of grasp that she crumpled it all up, and then tried with trembling hands to undo the crushed leaves, some of which fell at her feet. I watched the rise of the natural expression of wonder struggling through the look of insanity; but I could discover no joy, only something like fear. I still augured favourably. She was laid upon her bed, and

in about an hour afterwards fell into a troubled sleep. A day passed, yet amid my hopes I could see nothing on which I could absolutely rely as an undoubted sign of a favourable change, till on the evening of the second day, when she burst into a flood of tears. I had Mr. Bernard at her side at the end of this paroxysm, and in a very short time she was hanging upon his neck, sobbing like a child who is reconciled to its mother.

Under a date some six months after these indications of Amelia's convalescence, I find a note in my diary, "Dined at Redcleugh with Mr. and Mrs. Bernard; the invalid restored, and again the object of her husband's affection; the butler once more the pride of his major-domoship; the old Burgundy produced and declared better than ever; heard that musical laugh which once charmed Mr. Bernard from the depth of his sorrow, as it now mingled, like a fluid, with the glory of a summer sun shining through the green blinds, and spread joy throughout the old house of Redcleugh."

THE ROTHESAY FISHERMAN.

When I was a boy, I used to pass the summer vacation in the Isle of Bute, where my father had a small cottage, for the convenience of sea-bathing. I enjoyed my sea-side visits greatly, for I was passionately fond of boating and fishing, and, before I was sixteen, had become a fearless and excellent swimmer. From morning till night, I was rambling about the beach, or either sailing upon or swimming in the beautiful Frith. I was a prime favourite among the fishermen, with most of whom I was on familiar terms, and knew them all by name. Among their number was one man who particularly attracted my attention, and excited my curiosity. He was civil and obliging, though distant and reserved in his manners, with a shade of habitual melancholy on his countenance, which awakened my sympathy, at the same time that his "bearing," which was much above his station, commanded my respect. He *appeared* to be about sixty years of age; particularly prepossessing in his appearance; and his language and demeanour would have done honour to any rank of society. I felt involuntarily attracted towards him, and took every opportunity of showing my wish to please and become better acquainted with him; but in vain. He seemed gratified by my attentions; but I made no nearer approach to his confidence. He went, among his companions, by the name of "Gentleman Douglas;" but they appeared to be as ignorant of the particulars of his history as myself. All they knew of him was, that he had come among them a perfect stranger, some years before, no one knew from whence; that he seemed to have some means of support independent

of his boat; and that he was melancholy, silent, and reserved—as much as possible avoiding all communication with his neighbours. These particulars only served to whet my boyish curiosity, and I determined to leave no means untried to penetrate to the bottom of Douglas' mystery. Let me do myself justice, however: my eagerness to know his history proceeded from an earnest desire to soothe his sorrow, whatever it might be, and to benefit him in any way in my power. Day after day I used to stroll down to the beach, when he was preparing to get his boat under way, and volunteer to pull an oar on board. At first he seemed annoyed by my officiousness; and, though he always behaved with civility, showed, by his impatient manner, that he would rather dispense with my company; but the constant dripping of water will wear away a stone, and hard indeed must be the heart that will not be softened by unremitting kindness. My persevering wish to please him gradually produced the desired effect—he *was* pleased, and evinced it by his increasing cordiality of manner, and by the greater interest he seemed to take in all my movements. In a short time we became inseparables, and his boat hardly ever left the shore without me. My father was not at all adverse to my intimacy with Douglas; he knew him to be a sober, industrious man, and one who bore an irreproachable moral character; and as he was anxious that I should strengthen my constitution as much as possible in the sea-breeze, he thought I could not roam about under safer or less objectionable protection. On a further acquaintance with Douglas, I found him a most agreeable companion; for, when his reserve wore off, his conversation was amusing and instructive; and he had tales to tell of foreign lands and of distant seas, which he described with that minuteness and closeness which only a personal acquaintance with them could have produced. Often, in the course of his narration, his eye

would brighten and his cheek glow with an emotion foreign to his usual calm and melancholy manner; and then he would suddenly stop, as if some sound he had uttered had awakened dark memories of the past, and the gloom clouded his brow again, his voice trembled, and his cheek grew pale. These sudden transitions alarmed and surprised me; my suspicions were excited, and I began to imagine that the man must have been guilty of some unknown and dreadful crime, and that conscience was at such times busy within him. Douglas must have observed my changing manner; but it made little alteration in his demeanour towards myself.

"What is the matter, Douglas?" said I, one day, when I observed him start and turn pale at some casual observation of mine.

"Do not indulge a vain and idle curiosity, Master Charles, at the expense of another's feelings," replied he, gravely and mournfully, "nor endeavour to rake up the ashes of the past. The heart knows its own bitterness: long may yours be a stranger to sorrow! I have observed, with pain, that you, as others have done, begin to look upon me with suspicion. Be satisfied with the assurance, that I have no crimes needing concealment, to reproach myself with; and the sorrows of age should be sacred in the eyes of youth."

I was humbled by the old man's reproof, and hastened to express my concern for having hurt his feelings.

"Enough said, enough said, Mr. Charles," said he; "curiosity is natural at your age, and I am not surprised at your wishing, like some of your elders, to learn the cause of the melancholy which hangs over me like a cloud, darkening the path of life, and embittering all its pleasures. At some future time I will tell you the reason why you see me what I am; but I cannot now—the very thought of it unmans me."

Time wore on; every year I returned to the sea-side during the summer, and was always welcomed with unaffected cordiality by my old ally, Douglas. I was now a strapping youth of nineteen, tall and powerful of my age —thanks to the bracing sea-air and constant exercise. One day Douglas told me he was going over to Largs, and asked if I would accompany him.

"With all my heart," said I; and in ten minutes we were standing across the Frith with a fine steady breeze. We were close over to the Ayrshire coast, when a sudden puff of wind capsized the boat, and we were both thrown into the water. When I rose to the surface again, after my plunge, I looked around in vain for Douglas, who had disappeared. He had on a heavy pea-jacket, and I was at first afraid the weight and encumbrance of it must have sunk him; but, on second thoughts, I dived under the boat, and found him floundering about beneath the sail, from whence I succeeded with great difficulty in extricating him. He was quite exhausted, and it required all my strength to support him to the gunnel of the boat. After hanging on there some time, to recover breath, we swam together to the beach, which was not far distant. When we landed, he seated himself on a large stone, and remained silent for some time, with his face buried in his hands.

"Douglas," said I, wondering at his long silence, "are you hurt?"

To my great surprise I heard low sobs, and saw the tears trickling between his fingers. Thinking that he was grieved at the loss of his boat, I said—

"Cheer up, man! If the boat be lost, we will manage among us to get another for you."

"'Tisn't the boat, sir, 'tisn't the boat; we can soon raise *her* again: it is your kindness that has made a fool of me."

He then looked up in my face, and, drying his glistening

cheek with one hand, he shook mine long and heartily with the other.

"Mr. Charles, before I met you, I thought I was alone in the world; shunned by most around me as a man of mystery. Because I could not join in their rude sports and boisterous merriment, they attributed my reserve and visible dejection to sinister causes—possibly to some horrible and undiscovered crime." A blush here flitted across my countenance; but Douglas did not remark it. "Young, and warm, and enthusiastic, *you* sought me out with different feelings; you were attracted towards me by pity, and by a generous desire to relieve my distress. It was not the mere impulse of a moment; your kindness has been constant and unwavering—and now you have crowned all by saving my life. I hardly know whether or not to thank you for what was so worthless to myself; but I *do* thank you from the bottom of my heart for the friendly and generous feeling which actuated you. You shall know the cause of the sorrow that weighs upon my heart; I would not that one to whom I owe so much should look upon me with the slightest shade of suspicion. I think, when you know my story, you will pity and sympathize with me; but you will judge less harshly, I doubt not, than I do of myself."

"Do not call up unnecessary remembrances, which harrow your feelings, Douglas. That I have often thought there is mystery about you, I will not deny; but only once did the possibility of a cause of guilt flash across my mind. That unworthy suspicion has long past, and I am now heartily ashamed of myself for having harboured it for a moment. But we are forgetting the boat; we must try to get assistance to right her."

We soon fell in with one of the fishermen on the coast, with whose assistance she was speedily righted and baled out; and, after having done what we came for at Largs, we returned homewards.

"Meet me to-morrow at ten o'clock, Mr. Charles," said Douglas, at he grasped my hand at parting, "and you shall then hear my story, and judge whether or not I have cause to grieve."

At the appointed hour next morning I hastened to the rendezvous. The fisherman was already there, waiting for me.

"I daresay you are surprised to see me here so soon," said he; "but now that I have determined to make you my confidant, I feel eager to disburden my mind, and to seek relief from my sorrows in the sympathy of one whom I am so proud to call my friend.

I was nct always in the humble station in which you now see me, Mr. Stewart; but, thank Heaven! it was no misconduct of my own that occasioned the change. My father was an English clergyman, whose moderate stipend denied to his family the luxuries of life; but we had reason to acknowledge the truth of the wise man's saying, that "a dinner of herbs, where love is," is better than more sumptuous fare where that love is not. We were a united and a happy family, contented with the competence with which Providence had blessed us, and pitying, not envying, those who, endowed with greater wealth, were exposed to greater temptations. Oh! those happy, happy days! It sometimes almost maddens me, Mr. Stewart, to compare myself, as I am now, with what I was then. Every morning I rose with a light and happy heart, exulting in the sunbeam that awakened me with its smile, and blessing, in the gladfulness of youthful gratitude, the gracious Giver of light and life. My heart overflowed with love to all created beings. I could look back without regret, and the future was bright with hope. And now, what am I? A broken-hearted man, but still, after all my sufferings, grateful to the hand which has chastened me. I can picture the whole family grouped on a summer evening, now,

Mr. Stewart, as vividly as a sight of yesterday, though fifty years have cast their dark shadows between. My mother, seated beside her work-table under the neat verandah in front of our cottage, encouraging my sisters, with her sweet smile and gentle voice, in the working of their first sampler; my father, seated with his book, under the shade of his favourite laburnum tree; while my brother and I were trundling our hoops round the garden, shouting with boyish glee; and my little fair-haired cousin, Julia, tottering along with her little hands extended, to catch the butterfly that tempted her on from flower to flower. My brother Henry was two years younger than myself, and was at the time I speak of a remarkably handsome, active boy, of ten years of age—full of fun and mischief, unsteady and volatile. My father found considerable difficulty in confining Henry's attention to his studies; for, though uncommonly quick and intelligent, he wanted patience and application. He could not bear the drudgery of poring over musty books. He used to say to me—"How I should like to be an officer, a gallant naval officer, to lead on my men through fire and smoke to victory!" And then the little fellow would wave his hand, while the colour flushed his cheeks, and shout—"Come on! come on!" He had, somehow or other, got possession of an old naval chronicle; and from that moment his whole thoughts were of ships and battles, and his principal amusement was to launch little fleets of ships upon the pond at the bottom of the garden. My father, though mild and indulgent in other matters, was a strict disciplinarian in education; and often did I save Henry from punishment by helping him with his exercises and other lessons. Dearly did I love my gallant, high-spirited little brother; and he looked up to me with equal fondness.

I will not weary you with details, but at once jump over the next twelve years of my life. The scene was now

greatly changed at the parsonage. Death had been busy among its inmates; a contagious disorder had carried off my mother and sisters, and my poor father was left alone in his old age—not alone, for Julia was still with him. I forgot to say before, that she was the orphan daughter of his elder brother. Julia, at sixteen, was beautiful. I will not attempt to describe her, although every feature, every expression of her lovely countenance, is vividly pictured in my heart. She was its light, its pride, its hope. Alas! alas! she had grown up like a sweet flower beside me, and, from her infancy, had clung to me with a sister's confidence, and more than a sister's affection. Was it wonderful that I loved her? Yes, I loved her fondly and devotedly; and I soon had the bliss of knowing that my affection was returned. I had been for some time at college, studying for the church, when a distant relation died, and left me a comfortable competency. My father now consented with pleasure to my union with Julia; and a distant day was fixed for the marriage, to enable my brother Henry to be present. He had been abroad for some time in the merchant service, and his constant employment had prevented his visiting home for many years; but he had written to say that he expected now to have a long holiday with us. At length he returned, and great was my joy at meeting my beloved brother once more. He was a fine, handsome, manly-looking fellow—frank and boisterous in his manner, kind and generous in his disposition, but the slave of passion and impulse. In a week after his return, he became dull and reserved, and every one remarked the extraordinary change that had come over him. My father and I both thought that our quiet and monotonous life wearied and disgusted him, and that he longed for the more bustling scenes to which he had been accustomed. "Come, Harry!" said I to him one day, "cheer up, my boy! we shall be merry enough soon: you must lay in a

fresh stock of spirits; Julia will quarrel with you if you show such a melancholy phiz at our wedding." He turned from me with impatience, and, rushing out into the garden, I saw no more of him that day. I was hurt and surprised by his manner, and hastened to express my annoyance to Julia. She received me with less than her usual warmth, blushed when I talked of my brother, and soon left me on some trifling pretext. My father had gone to visit a neighbouring clergyman, at whose house he was taken suddenly and alarmingly ill. I hastened to his bedside, and found him in such a precarious state, that I determined upon remaining near him. I therefore despatched a messenger to Julia, informing her of my intention, and intimating that it would be necessary to postpone our marriage, which was to have taken place in the course of a week, until my father's recovery. In answer to my letter, I received a short and hurried reply, merely acquiescing in the propriety of my movements, and without any expression of regret at my lengthened absence. Surprised at the infrequency and too apparent indifference of Julia's answers to the long and impassioned letters which I almost daily wrote to her, alarmed at the long interval which had elapsed since I last heard from her, and fearing that illness might have occasioned her silence, I left my father, who was rapidly recovering, and hastened home. When I arrived at the parsonage, I walked into the drawing-room; but as neither Julia nor my brother was there, I concluded they were out walking, and, taking a book, I sat down, impatiently waiting their return. Some time having elapsed, however, without their making their appearance, I rang the bell; and our aged servant, on entering, started at seeing me there.

"La, sir!" said she, "I did'nt expect to see *you!*"

"Where are Miss Julia and my brother?"

"Why, la, sir! I was just agoing to ask *you*. Miss Julia

had a letter from you about a week ago, and she and Mr. Henry went off in a poshay together next day. They said they would be back to-day."

I said not a word in reply, but buried my face in my folded arms on the table, while the cold perspiration flowed over my brow, and my heart sickened within me, as the fatal truth by degrees broke upon me.

"Fool, fond fool, that I was, to have been so long blind!" muttered I; "but it cannot be!—Julia!—*my* Julia!—no, no!" And I almost cursed myself for the unworthy suspicion. But why dwell longer upon these moments of agony? My first surmise was a correct one. In a week's time all was known. My brother, my brother Harry, for whom I would have sacrificed fortune, life itself, had betrayed my dearest trust, and had become the husband of her I had fondly thought my own. The blow was too sudden and overpowering; I sunk beneath it. My reason became unsettled, and for several months I was unconscious of my own misery. I awoke to sense, an altered man. My heart was crushed. my very blood seemed to be turned into gall; I hated my kind, and resolved to seclude myself for ever from a world of falsehood and ingratitude. The only tie which could have reconciled me to life had been wrenched away from me during my unconsciousness: my brother's misconduct had broken my father's heart, and I was left alone in the world. I paid one sad visit to my father's grave, shed over it bitter tears of sorrow and disappointment, and from that hour to this I have never seen the home in which I passed so many happy days. Some months afterwards, I received a letter from a friend residing in Wales, of a very extraordinary nature, requested me instantly to visit him, and stating that he had something of importance to communicate to me. I knew the writer, and confided in him; he had known my misfortune, and wept with me over the loss of

my Julia and of my father. I hastened to him on the wings of expectation, and, when I arrived, was taken by him into an inner apartment of his house, with an air of secrecy and mystery.

"Have you yet recovered from the effects of your misfortunes?" said he. "I have often reflected on your extraordinary fate, and pitied you from the innermost recesses of my soul. Would you believe it? I have in store for you an antidote against the grief of your ruined affections; but I will not say a medicine for your pain, or a balm for your sorrow."

"For a broken heart," said I, "there is no cure in this world."

He looked at me, and wept.

"Dress yourself in this suit of my mournings," he said, "and accompany me whither I will lead you."

I gazed at him in amazement; but he left me to put on the weeds, and to torture myself with vain thoughts.

He returned and called me out. I followed him. We went some little distance, and joined a funeral that was slowly proceeding to the burying-ground. My confusion prevented me from looking at the time to see who was chief mourner. I proceeded with the mourners, and soon stood on the brink of the grave. When the pall was taken off, and the coffin lowered down into the earth, my eye caught the inscription on the plate; it was—"J. M., aged 20." "So young!" muttered I; and at the same moment I glanced at the chief mourner. He had withdrawn his handkerchief from his face. Our eyes met—he turned deadly pale, and made a motion as if to leave the ground; but I sprang forward, almost *shrieking* 'Henry!' and detained him. I looked in his face. Oh, what a change was there! His eye quailed beneath the cold, steady, withering glance of mine. I felt that he read the meaning of that glance, for he absolutely writhed beneath it.

"Do not revile me, brother," murmured he; "the hand of Heaven has been heavy upon me; my crime has already met with its punishment. Oh, my poor, poor Julia!"

"Where, where is she?" wildly exclaimed I. He pointed to the new-made grave?

Oh, the bitterness of that hour! We wept—the betrayer and the betrayed wept together over the grave of their buried hopes. I arose calm and collected. "Brother," said I, giving him my hand, "my animosity shall be buried with her; may your own heart forgive you as freely as I do the injury you have done me! But we must never meet more." And, with slow steps and aching heart, I turned and left the spot.

I received a letter from Henry some time afterwards, from one of the outports, telling me that he was just on the point of leaving England for ever, and imploring my forgiveness in the most touching terms, "for the sake of our early days, the happy years of our boyhood." Those early days—those happy days!—my heart softened towards him as I thought of them. Sorely as he had wronged me, he was my brother still, and I felt that I could, if permitted, clasp him to my heart once more.

Weary of life, and tired of the world, I dragged on a miserable existence for some time, in a secluded situation on the shores of Cornwall; but, by degrees, the monotony of my sedentary and recluse life wearied me. I began to associate with the poor fishermen around me, and, in a short time, became enthusiastically fond of their perilous and exciting mode of life. The sea became to me quite a "passion"—my mind had found a new channel for its energies; and when, a short time afterwards, I lost my little fortune through the mismanagement or villany of my agent, I took staff in hand, and, hastening to Liverpool, boldly launched into life again as a common seaman, on board a merchant vessel bound to the West Indies.

I had toiled on for several years as a common seaman, during which time I attracted the notice of my captain, by my indefatigable attention to the duties of my station, and by the reckless indifference with which I lavished my strength, and often risked my life, in the performance of them.

"Douglas" (for that was the name which I had assumed), "Douglas," said the captain to me one day, after I had been particularly active during a heavy gale we encountered, "I must try if I cannot do something for you; your activity and energy entitle you to promotion. I will speak to the owners when we return, and endeavour to procure you a mate's berth." I thanked him, and went forward again to my duty. A few days afterwards, we were going along with a strong beaming wind; there was a high sea running, every now and then throwing a thick spray over the weather bulwarks; the hands were at dinner, and I was just coming up to relieve the man at the wheel; there was no one on deck but the mate of the watch, and the captain, who was standing on the weather bulwark, shaking the backstays, to feel if they bore an equal strain: all at once the ship gave a heavy weather lurch, the captain lost his footing, and was overboard in a moment. I instantly sprang aft, cut away the life-buoy, and knowing that he was but an indifferent swimmer, jumped overboard after him. As I said before, the sea was running high, and a few minutes elapsed before I caught sight of him, rising on the crest of a wave, at some distance from me. I saw he could not hold out long; for he was over-exerting himself, shouting and raising his hand for assistance, and his face was pale as death. I struck out desperately towards him, and shouted, when I got near him, "Keep up your heart, sir; be cool; don't attempt to lay hold of me, and, please God, I will save you yet." My advice had the desired effect, and restored his self-possession; he became more cool and collected, and with occasional support from me, contrived

to reach the life-buoy. In the meantime, all was confusion on board the ship; the second mate of the watch, a young hand, in the hurry of the moment, threw the ship too suddenly up to the wind, a squall struck her at the moment, and the foretopmast and topgallantmast went over the side, dragging the maintopgallantmast with them. The cry of "A man overboard!" had hurried the crew on deck, and the crash of the falling spars, and the contradictory orders from the quarter-deck, at first puzzled and confused them; but the *chief* mate was a cool, active seaman, and the moment he made his appearance order and silence were restored; the quarter-boat was instantly lowered, numbers of the men springing forward to volunteer to man her, for the captain was deservedly beloved by his crew; and the rest of the hands were immediately set to work to clear away the wreck. In a few minutes the boat reached us, and we were safely seated in the stern sheets.

"Douglas, my gallant fellow," said the captain, shaking me cordially by the hand, "I may thank *you* that I am not food for the fishes by this time. I had just resigned myself to my fate, when your voice came over the water to me, like a messenger of hope and safety. How can I ever repay you?"

"I am sufficiently repaid, Captain Rose, by seeing you beside me; the only way in which you can serve me, is by giving me a lift in the way of promotion, when we return home."

"I will, you may depend upon it," replied he; "and as long as I live, you may apply to me as a firm and faithful friend.

I was highly gratified by this promise; for the great object of my ambition for some time past had been to raise myself again from obscurity into something like my former station in life. Next voyage, through the captain's interest with the owners, I was appointed chief mate of the Albion,

Captain Rose's ship, for which I was found duly qualified, having employed all my spare hours at sea in acquiring a knowledge of the theory of navigation. Captain Rose was like a brother to me, introducing me to his family and friends as the saver of his life, and making quite a *lion* of me in Liverpool. We sailed in company with a large fleet, under convoy of three frigates and two sloops of war, and had been some time at sea when a heavy gale of wind came on one afternoon, which completely dispersed the convoy. When it commenced there were nearly two hundred sail in sight; at the end of two days, we were alone. The Albion was a beautiful vessel of her class, about four hundred tons burden; an excellent sea-boat. We had a smart active crew, besides a number of passengers, and were well furnished for defence, if required; but we were now so near our port that we dreaded little danger. However, it was necessary to be constantly on the alert, for there were many piratical vessels in those seas, which, in spite of the vigilance and activity of H.M. cruisers, were constantly on the watch to pounch upon any stray merchantmen. Capt. Rose was, on the whole, rather pleased at his separation from the convoy, as there were only one or two other vessels, besides himself, bound to the Havannah, and he would have been obliged to accompany the body of the fleet to Barbadoes. After we had parted from the convoy, we made the best of our way towards Cuba. One night. it was almost calm, but with every appearance of a coming breeze; the moon was nearly at her full, but dark, heavy clouds were drifting quickly over her, which almost entirely hid her from our view, except when, at intervals, she threw from between them a broad flash over the waters, as bright and almost as momentary as lightning gleams. We were crawling slowly along, with all our small canvas set; the breeze was blowing off the shore, the dark shadow of which lay like a shroud upon the water; it was

nearly eight bells in the first watch; the captain and several of the passengers were still on deck, enjoying the cool, delightful breeze; but their suspicious and anxious glances into the dark shadow to windward, seemed to intimate that their conversation over their grog that evening, which had been of the pirates that infested those islands, and Cuba in particular, had awakened their fears and aroused their watchfulness.

"Hark! Captain Rose," said I, "what noise is that?"

Every face was instantly turned over the weather gunwale, and in breathless silence they all listened in the direction to which I pointed. A low, murmuring, rippling sound was heard, and a kind of dull, smothered, creaking noise repeated at short intervals; nothing was to be seen, however, for all was in deep shadow in that quarter.

"Talk of the devil, and he'll show his horns, Douglas!" said the captain. "I have not been so long at sea without being able to distinguish the whispering of the smooth water when a sharp keel is slipping through it, or the sound of muffled sweeps. There may be mischief there, or there may not; but we'll be prepared for the worst. Get the men quietly to their quarters, put an extra dose of grape into the guns, and have all our tools ready."

Just at this moment the moonlight broke brightly through the clouds, and showed us a small, black-looking schooner, slowly crawling out from the shadow of the land. Her decks were apparently crowded with people, and she had a boat towing astern. The men were soon at their quarters—and a fine, active, spirited set of fellows they were—each armed with a cutlass and a brace of pistols, while tomahawks and boarding pikes lay at hand for use if required. The passengers were all likewise provided with muskets, pistols, and cutlasses, and the servants were ready to load spare fire-arms. We mustered about fifty in all; but there was not a flincher among us.

"Now, my lads;" said Captain Rose to his crew, "we must have a brush for it. I have no doubt those fellows are pirates; and if once they get footing on this deck, I would not give a farthing for any man's life on board. Be cool and quiet. Don't throw away a shot; remember that you are fighting for your lives; I do not doubt your courage, but be cool and steady!"

In the meantime, the dark hull of the schooner was gradually nearing us.

"Schooner ahoy!" shouted Captain Rose. No answer; but the sweeps dipped faster into the water, which rippled up beneath her bow. "Schooner, ahoy!—answer, or I'll fire!" Still no reply; but, almost immediately, a bright sudden flash burst from her bow, and a shot came whizzing through the mizen-rigging.

"I thought so," calmly said the captain; "be cool, my lads; we must not throw away a shot; he's hardly within our range yet." The moon broke out for a moment. "Now, my lads, take time, and a steady aim. Give it him!" And flash, flash—bang, bang, went all our six carronades. The captain's advice had not been thrown away; the aim had been cool and deliberate; we heard the loud crashing of the sweeps as the grape-shot rattled among them, and fell pattering into the water; and at the same time a yell arose from the schooner, as if all the devils in hell were broke loose. The next glimpse of moonlight showed us her foretopmast hanging over the side.

"Well done, my fine fellows!" shouted Captain Rose; "bear a hand, and give them another dose. We must keep them at arms' length as long as we can." The schooner had by this time, braced up on the larboard tack, and was standing the same way as ourselves, so as to bring her broadside to bear upon us; and seemed to be trying to edge out of the range of our guns.

"Oh, oh," said our gallant captain, "is that your play,

old boy? You want to pepper us at a distance: that'll never do. Starboard, my boy!—So! steady! Now, my lads, fire way!"—And again our little bark shook with the explosion. The schooner was not slow in returning the compliment. One of her shot lodged in our hull and another sent the splinters flying out of the boat on the booms. Immediately after she fired, she stood away before the wind, and, rounding our stern at a respectful distance, she crawled up on the other side of us, as fast almost as if we had been at anchor, with a wish apparently to cut off our escape in that direction. But he was playing a deeper game. A long, dark, unbroken cloud was passing over the moon, which threw its black shadow over the water, and partially concealed the movements of the pirate. When it cleared away again, he was braced sharp up on the larboard tack, standing across our bows, with the intention of raking us.

"Starboard the helm!—Brace sharp up!—Bear a hand, my fine fellows!"—And, before she had time to take advantage of her position, the Albion again presented her broadside. The flash from the pirate's guns was quickly followed by the report of ours, and we heard immediately the loud clattering of blocks on board of her, as if some sail had come down by the run. At this moment, I thought I heard some strange noise astern, and, running aft, I plainly distinguished the sound of muffled oars, and, immediately after, saw a small dark line upon the water.

"Aft, here, small-arm men!" shouted I.

"Boat, ahoy!—Boat, ahoy!"—A loud and wild cheer rose from the boat; and the men in her, finding that caution would no longer avail them, evidently redoubled their efforts at their oars.

"Fire!" shouted the captain, while a blue light he had just ignited threw a pale unearthly glare over the ship's tafferel, and showed us our new and unexpected enemy.

It was the pirate's boat, which she had dropped during the partial obscurity I spoke of, intending to board us a-head herself, while the boat's crew attacked us astern. It was fortunate that we happened to hear them—three minutes more and nothing could have saved us. There was a set of the most ferocious-looking desperadoes I had ever seen, armed to the teeth; and the boat (a large one) was crowded with them. Deadly was the effect of our fire. Four or five of the men at the oars were tumbled over on their faces; but their places were instantly supplied by others, who, with loud yells for revenge, bent desperately to their oars. In a few minutes the boat shot up under the mizen-chains, while the bullets that were raining down upon them from above only rendered them more desperate. The living trampled upon the dying and the dead, in their eargerness to board; and, in a thick swarm, the blood-thirsty scoundrels came yelling over the bulwarks. A sharp and well-directed fire staggered them for a moment, and sent several of them to their last account. We now threw aside the muskets, for cutlasses and tomahawks. Hand to hand, foot to foot, desperate and deadly was the struggle.

"Down with them, my lads!" shouted Rose. "Hew the blood-thirsty villains to pieces. No quarter! no quarter!—show them such mercy as they would show you!"

Short and bloody was the conflict; several of the pirates had been killed, the deck was slippery with blood, and the rest were keeping their ground with difficulty. I had a long and severe hand-to-hand fight with one of them. We had each received desperate wounds, when his foot slipped on the bloody deck. I gave him a severe stroke on the head with a tomahawk, and, after a deadly struggle on the gang-way, tumbled him backwards overboard. The moon shone bright out at the moment, and fell full upon his face. Merciful heaven!—my brain reeled, I staggered against a gun, and became insensible—that face, Mr. Stewart. haunts

my dreams to this hour with its ghastly, despairing expression. It was the long-lost Henry's—I was my brother's murderer! (Here the poor fellow hid his face in his hands, and groaned with agony. I pitied him from my heart; but I knew that sorrow such as his "will not be comforted" in the moment of its strength; so I sat in silence beside him, till his first burst of grief was over, and then I endeavoured calmly and coolly to reason with him on the subject, and to persaude him, by all the arguments I could think of, that he had no cause to reproach himself with what had happened).

"It is kindly meant of you, Mr. Stewart (said he, mournfully shaking his head), kindly meant, but in vain! I know that I was only acting in self-defence—that it was life against life—that I was perfectly justified, in the eyes of men, in taking the life of him who would have taken mine—but I cannot drive that last despairing look from my memory. I feel as if my brother's blood were crying out against my soul. O my poor Harry! would that the blow had fallen on my head instead of thine!—would that I had had time to tell thee how fondly I loved thee, how freely I forgave thee!

"But I beg pardon, Mr. Stewart;—I must go on with my tale. Ten of the pirates were lying dead on the deck, and five of our poor fellows; the bodies of the former were immediately thrown overboard, and the others were laid side by side amidships, till we could find time to give them Christian burial. Our last lucky shot had prevented the pirate from carrying the other part of his scheme into effect: the moon was now shining out full and clear, and by her light we saw that her throat halyards had been shot away, and her main-sail was flapping over the quarter; there were hands aloft, reaving new halyards, and busily employed about the mast-head, as if it were crippled. "We have had fighting enough for one bout," said Captain Rose;"

"we must run for it now." Our main-top-gallant mast was hanging over the side, and our sails were riddled with the schooner's shot; she had evidently been firing high, to disable us, that she might carry us by boarding. We clapped on all the sail we could, served out grog to the men, and lay down at our quarters. We were not suffered to remain at peace long: the moment the schooner perceived our intention, she edged away after us, and having repaired her damage, set her main-sail again; and, as the wind was still light, with the assistance of her remaining sweeps, came crawling up again in-shore of us. "Scoundrels!" muttered the captain, "they will stick to us like leeches as long as there is a drop of blood left on board."

Again we saw the flash of her gun, and the smoke curling white in the moonbeam. The shot told with fatal effect; our main-top-sail-yard creaked, bent, and snapped in the slings, falling forward in two pieces.

The loud cheers of the pirate crew came faintly over the water; but our brave fellows, nothing daunted, responded to them heartily.

"They have winged us, my lads!" said our gallant captain; "but we will die game at all events." The men answered him with another cheer, and swore they would go to the bottom rather than yield. We blazed away at the schooner, but in vain; she had been severely taught to respect us; our shot fell far short, while she, with her long metal, kept dropping shot after shot into us with deadly precision. We tried to close with her; but she saw her advantage, and kept it; all that we could do was to stand steadily on, the men lying down under the shelter of the bulwarks. A faint dull sound now fell upon our ears, like the report of a distant gun. "Thank heaven!" said I, "our guns have spoken to some purpose; some of the cruisers have taken the alarm." We immediately burnt a blue light, and threw up a couple of rockets. In a few

minutes a shout of joy burst from the crew, a small glimmering star appeared in the distance, which flickered for a moment, and then increased to a strong, steady, glaring light; at the same time, we heard a second report, much nearer and clearer than before. Alarmed at the near approach of the stranger, which was now distinctly visible, standing towards us under a press of sail, the pirate, determined to have another brush with us, bore up, and closed with us. But we were prepared for him; he was evidently staggered by our warm reception; and, giving us a parting broadside, hove round, stood in under the dark shadow of the land, and we soon lost sight of him.

The stranger proved to be H.M. sloop Porcupine. She hove to when she neared us, and sent a boat on board. She had heard the report of our guns, and hastened to the scene of action, just in the very nick of time to save us. The lieutenant complimented the captain and crew on their gallant defence, and hastened on board the sloop again, to make his report. The boat soon returned, with a gang of hands to assist in repairing our damages; and on the evening of the next day, we were safely at anchor. When the excitement of the action was over, the pain of my wounds and the agitation of my mind brought on a violent attack of fever. During my delirium, the vision of my dying brother was ever before me; and in my madness I twice made an attempt upon my own life. At length the goodness of my constitution triumphed over the violence of my disorder; but my peace of mind was gone for ever. My worthy friend, the captain, to whom I confided my story, did everything in his power to rouse me from my sorrow, and to reconcile me to myself; but in vain. The sight of my brother had recalled the vivid recollection of by-gone scenes, which I had been for years steeling my heart to forget; my spirit was broken, I became listless and indifferent, and no longer felt any interest in my profession.

I did my duty, to be sure; but it was mechanically—from the force of habit. Captain Rose was ceaseless in his kindness. When, on our return home, I expressed my determination not to go to sea again, he represented my conduct during the action, and on other occasions, in such glowing terms, to the owners, that they settled a small annuity upon me, in consideration of the wounds I had received in their service. It was with the deepest regret I took leave of my worthy friend and captain.

"I can never forget," said he, "that, but for you, my children would have been fatherless, my wife a widow; whenever you need the assistance of a friend, Douglas, apply to me with as much confidence as to a brother."

He then offered to evince his regard in a more substantial manner, which I firmly but gratefully declined. I wrote to him afterwards, telling him that I had settled in this neighbourhood, and requesting him to make arrangements that my annuity might be made payable to a certain firm in Glasgow. In reply, he wrote me a long and affectionate letter. It was the first and last I ever had from him; he died soon afterwards. It is now five years since I took up my abode here, and I feel the weakness and infirmities of age creeping fast upon me. Oh! how happily will I lay down the weary load of life!"

"Douglas," said I, when he had finished his story, "you certainly have had grievous sorrows and trials; but you have borne them nobly, except in wilfully attaching the odium of crime to the unfortunate circumstances of your brother's death."

"Would that I could think as you do!" said he.

We parted; and four years elapsed before we met again. I had, in the meantime, commenced practice as a surgeon in Glasgow, and my professional avocations kept me too constantly employed to allow of my leaving the town. At last, after a severe attack of illness, I was recommended

to go to the sea-side for a few months; and my thoughts immediately recurred to my old friend. I took a lodging in Rothesay, and next morning went down to the beach, where I saw the old man just preparing to put off.

"Here I am again, Douglas," said I.

"Sir!" replied he, looking at me at first doubtingly, for illness had greatly reduced me. "Ah! Mr. Stewart, is that you? I thought you had forgotten me."

"Then you did me injustice, Douglas; I have often and often regretted that the pressure of business prevented my visiting you again. By the by, I was reminded of you in rather an extraordinary way lately."

"How was that, sir?"

"On my way down here, a few days since, the steamer touched at Greenock. I was standing on the quay when a poor fellow, a passenger in a vessel just arrived, fell from the gangway, and was taken up insensible. I immediately bled him; and, seeing that he appeared to be seriously injured, I determined, as I had no other particular call upon my time, to remain beside him till he recovered. I had him carried to a small lodging in the neighbourhood, where he soon partially recovered; and, having prescribed for him, I left him, desiring that I might be sent for if any change took place. During the night he had a violent attack of fever. I was sent for; when I arrived, I found him delirious; he was raving about Cuba, and ships, and pirates, and fifty other things that immediately recalled you to my remembrance. When he came to his senses again—

"'Doctor! tell me the truth,' said he: 'am I not dying?'

"'No,' replied I; 'your present symptoms are favourable; everything depends upon your keeping your mind and body quiet.'

"'Quiet mind!' muttered he, with a bitter smile on

his countenance. 'It is not that I fear death, doctor; I think I could willingly depart in peace, if I had but been allowed time to find the person whom I came to Scotland in search of.'

"'And who is that?'

"'A fisherman at Rothesay.'

"He mentioned the name; but at this moment I forget it. Let me see—it was—ay, it was Ponsonby—Charles Ponsonby."

Douglas started, and turned pale.

"Ponsonby!" exclaimed he; "that was *my* name, my father's name! Who can he be? Perhaps some old shipmate of poor Harry's. I will go directly and see him." And he turned as if to depart.

"Gently, gently, my friend," said I, detaining him; "I must go with you. When I left the poor fellow under the charge of a medical man at Greenock, he was greatly better; but he had received some severe internal injury, and he cannot live long. A sudden surprise might hasten his death. I must go with you to prevent accidents."

We went on board the next steamer that started, and in two hours we landed at Greenock. I led the way to the small lodging in which I had left my patient; and leaving Douglas at the door, went in to inquire into the state of the sufferer's health, and to prepare him for his visitor. I found him asleep; but his was not the slumber that refreshes—the restless and unquiet spirit within was disturbing the rest of the fevered and fatigued body. His flushed cheek lay upon one arm, while his other was every now and then convulsively raised above his head, and his lips moved with indistinct mutterings.

"He is asleep," said I to Douglas; "we must wait till he awakens."

"Oh, let me look at him," said he; "it can do no harm. He must be an old shipmate of poor Harry's; perhaps he has some memento of him for me."

"Very well," said I; "you may come in; but make as little noise as possible."

We walked up gently to the bed; Douglas looked earnestly at the sleeper, and, suddenly raising his clasped hands, he exclaimed—

"Merciful heaven! it is Henry himself!"

The poor patient started with a wild and fevered look. "Who called me? I thought I heard Charles' voice! Where am I? Give way in the boat!—oh, spare me, spare me, Charles!—Fire!—Down with them! Hurra!"—And, waving his hands above his head, he sunk down again on his bed, exhausted.

He soon fell into a deep slumber, which lasted for some hours. I was sitting by his bedside when he awoke.

"How do you feel now?" said I.

"O doctor! I am dying. I have been dreaming: I thought I heard the voice of one I have deeply injured—nay, I dreamt I *saw* him; but changed, how changed!—and I—I have been the cause of it."

Here he was interrupted by the smothered sobs of poor Douglas, or Charles, as I now must call him.

"Who is that? there is somebody else in the room," said he; and, drawing the curtain aside, he saw his brother. "Then it was no dream! O Charles!" and, turning round, he buried his face in the pillow. Douglas sprang forward, and, throwing himself on the bed, gave way to a violent burst of emotion.

"Henry! dear Henry! look at me—it *is* your brother, Henry!"

The dying man groaned. "I cannot look you in the face, Charles," said he, "till you say you have forgiven me."

"Forgiven you!" replied the other; "bless you! bless you, Henry! if you did but know the load of remorse that the sight of you has relieved me from! Thank heaven I was *not* your murderer!"

"And can you forget the past, Charles?" said Henry. "Do not my ears deceive me? Do you really forgive me?"

"Freely, fully, from my heart!" was the reply; "the joy of meeting you again, even thus, repays me for all I have suffered."

"O Charles!" again ejaculated Henry, "you were always generous and forgiving; but this is more than I expected from you."

I was now going to leave the room; but my patient, noticing my intention, begged me to remain.

"Stay, doctor, and listen to my confession; concealment is no longer necessary, for I feel that the hand of death is upon me, and that, in a few short hours, my career of sin, and shame, and sorrow, will be at an end."

"My poor fellow," said I, "I have heard the first part of your story from your brother; you had better defer the remainder till you have recovered from your present agitation; I will come again to-morrow."

"To-morrow, sir!" said he; where may I be before to-morrow? Oh, let me speak now, while time and strength are allowed. It will do me good, sir; it will relieve my mind, and be a comfort to my troubled spirit."

Feeling that he was right, I seated myself, while he thus commenced his tale:—

"You remember, Charles, our last sad parting—when we stood"——

"Mention it not, Harry!" groaned his brother—"there is agony in the recollection. Poor Julia!"

"When I left you, I was maddened with sorrow and remorse; all night long I wandered about in a state of distraction, and, when morning dawned, I fell down by the roadside, overcome with fatigue and misery. How long I lay I know not; when I awoke, the sun was high in the heaven; and, during one brief moment of forgetfulness, I

rejoiced in his brightness. Alas! it was but for a moment; my guilty love, my treachery, my loss, all flashed upon my mind at once, and I started to my feet, and hurried madly onwards, as if I hoped, by the rapidity of my movements, to escape from my own thoughts. Hunger at last compelled me to enter a small public-house, where I fell in with a poor sailor, who was on his way to Liverpool in search of a ship. The sight of this man turned my thoughts into another channel. 'Double-dyed traitor that I am,' muttered I, 'England is no longer a home for me. She for whose love I broke a father's heart and betrayed a brother's confidence, has been torn from me; and what more have I to live for here?' My mind was made up.

"'My lad,' said I to the sailor, 'if you have no objection, we will travel together; I am bound to Liverpool myself.'

"'With all my heart,' said he; 'I like to sail in company.'

"I engaged to work my passage out before the mast, in a ship bound to Jamaica, intending to turn my education to some account there if possible, or, at all events, to remain there as long as my money lasted. When I saw the shores of my native land sink in the distance, I felt that I was a forlorn and miserable outcast—that the last link was severed that bound me to existence. A dark change came over me; a spirit of desperation and reckless indifference; a longing wish to end my miseries at once. I strove against the evil spirit; and for a while succeeded. On our arrival at Kingston, I endeavoured in vain to obtain employment; my stock of money was fast decreasing; and when that was gone, where was I to turn for more? Poverty and wretchedness threatened me from without; remorse was busy within. 'Why should I bear this weary load of life?' said I, as I madly paced the shore, 'when one bold plunge would bury it for ever?'

"I threw myself headlong into the water; and, though

an excellent swimmer, I resolutely kept my face beneath the surface; yes, with desperate determination, I strove to *force* myself into the presence of that dread Being whom I had so grievously offended. When I came to my senses again, I was lying on a part of the beach I was unacquainted with; a tall, handsome, dark-featured young man, was bending over me, and, within a few yards of where I lay, a small light boat was drawn up on the shore.

"'So you have opened your eyes at last, my friend,' said the man; 'you have had a narrow squeak for it. When I dragged you out of the water, like a drowned rat, I thought all was over with you. Have you as many lives as a cat that you can afford to throw away *one* in such a foolish manner?'

"'Life! I am sick of it,' answered I.

"'Well,' said he, 'if that is the case, why not throw it away like a man, among men? Come with me, and I will furnish you with active employment to drive the devil out of your mind. But here, before we start, take some of the cordial to cheer you.'

"I was chilled and exhausted, and took a hearty draught. I felt its warmth steal through my frame—it mounted to my brain—I laughed aloud; I felt that I was equal to any act of desperation. Alas! I little knew the snare I was falling into. We launched the boat and sprang into it; and my companion, seizing the oars, pulled rapidly along the beach. After rowing some distance, we saw a light glimmering amid the bushes; it was now nearly dusk; my companion lay on his oars, and gave a long, low, peculiar whistle, which was immediately answered. He then ran the boat ashore; two men sprang in, who relieved him at the oars; and we again held on our way. There was a great deal of conversation carried on in a low tone; and from what I heard of it, half tipsy as I was, I inferred that my companion, whom the other men ad-

dressed with great respect, was a naval officer on some secret duty. Just as we were crossing the mouth of a narrow creek, a light four-oared gig dashed out after us, a voice hailed us in English to lie on our oars, and, when we still held on our course, a musket ball whizzed over us, to enforce obedience.

"'The piratical rascals!' exclaimed the young man; 'if they lay hold of us, we are all dead men.' 'Here!' continued he, seizing a musket, which lay in the stern sheets, and giving me another, fire for your life!'

"I was half mad with fever, and the effects of my late draught; and, under the persuasion that our lives were in danger, I fired. The bowman of the gig fell, and we rapidly left her. We came at last to a narrow lagune, close to the low shore of which lay a small schooner at anchor, with sails bent, and every preparation for a start.

"'Welcome on board the little Spitfire, my man!' said the young stranger; 'we want hands—will you ship?'

"'What colours do you sail under,' replied I.

"'Oh, not particular to a shade,' said he; 'any that happens to suit us for the time being: black is rather a favourite.'

"'Black!' exclaimed I; 'I thought you were king's men. I won't go with you.'

"'It is too late, my lad—go you must! Besides, there is no safety for you on shore now; you shot one of the crew of the cruiser's gig, and they will have life for life, depend upon it.'

"The whole horror of my situation now burst upon me. I was in a fearful strait; but I made up my mind at once, to deceive the pirates, by appearing to be contented with my situation, and to take advantage of the first opportunity that presented itself to escape.

"'Well,' said I, 'if that's the case, I had better die fighting bravely like a man, than hang like a dog from the yard-arm of a man-of-war.'

"'Bravely said, my hearty!' replied the young leader; 'but we must be moving—the blue jackets will be after us; that shot of yours will bring the whole hornet's nest about our ears.'

"We got under way; and, after rounding the east end of Jamaica, we stood away for the Cuba shore. The very first time we came to an anchor, I made an attempt to escape; I had saved part of my provisions for some days before, and concealed it, in readiness to take with me. We were lying close to the shore, and the darkness of the night would, I thought, conceal my movements; I was just slipping over the schooner's side, to swim ashore, when I felt a touch upon my shoulder, and, turning round, a dark lantern flashed in my face, and I saw the young pirate standing beside me. He held a cocked pistol to my head. 'One touch of this trigger,' said he, 'and you would require no more looking after. My eye has been upon you all along; you cannot escape me; do not attempt it again—the consequences may be fatal.'

"From that hour I was aware that I was constantly and narrowly watched. Except in the one instance of the gig's man, whom I had fired at under a delusion, it was my good fortune as yet to have escaped imbruing my hands in blood. During the action with the Albion, I was sent in the boat, under the particular charge of the mate. 'Keep your eye on this fellow,' said the captain; 'If he flinches for a moment, blow his brains out instantly; we must *glue him* to us with blood. I will keep her in play till you creep alongside; and, once on board, cut every one down before you—give no quarter.'

"My blood ran cold at this horrible order, and I determined upon doing all in my power to counteract its execution. I was delighted when you discovered our approach and the blue light flashed from your stern; for I dreaded the scene of massacre that must have ensued, if we had

boarded you unawares. I sprang on deck with the rest, in hopes that I might be able to prevent some bloodshed; but, when I was violently attacked, my passions were aroused, and I fought desperately for my life. Just as you tumbled me over the gangway, the gleam of moonshine showed me your face. I recognised you immediately; and, when I rose to the surface of the water again after my plunge, I blessed heaven that I had been spared the guilt of murder. I reached the boat which was still hanging under your quarter, cut the painter, and in the confusion, escaped unnoticed. I immediately made for the shore; and after many hair-breadth escapes from my old associates, I volunteered on board one of the cruisers on the Jamaica station. At length she returned home, the crew were paid off, and I determined to seek you out. On inquiring at the office of the owners of the Albion, in Liverpool, they told me that the late chief mate had settled, some years before, in the neighbourhood of Rothesay, in the Isle of Bute, and was still alive. Thank heaven! I have found you at last! I should like to live, Charles, to prove to you my sorrow and repentance for the past; but, as heaven has willed it otherwise, the blessed assurance of your forgiveness will lighten death of half its terrors."

The poor fellow breathed his last a few days afterwards. Douglas mourned long and deeply for his brother's death; but after time had soothed his grief, he became quite an altered man. His mind and spirits recovered their elasticity, after the load which had so long weighed them down was removed. He did not resume his own name; but lived many years afterwards, contented and happy, in the humble station of a fisherman; and it was not till after his death that his old companions discovered how justly the name of "Gentleman Douglas" had been applied to him. His tombstone bore the simple inscription, "Charles

Douglas Ponsonby, eldest son of the late Reverend T. Ponsonby."

I often wander, in the calm summer evenings, to the quiet churchyard, and return a sadder, but, I hope, a better man, after meditating upon the troublous and adventurous life, and peaceful and Christian death of the ROTHESAY FISHERMAN.

LEAVES

FROM

THE DIARY OF AN AGED SPINSTER.

THE poet of THE ELEGY *par excellence*, hath written two lines, which run thus—

> "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Now, I never can think of these lines but they remind me of the tender, delicate, living, breathing, and neglected flowers that bud, blossom, shed their leaves, and die, in cold unsunned obscurity—flowers that were formed to shed their fragrance around a man's heart, and to charm his eye—but which, though wandering melancholy and alone in the wilderness where they grow, he passeth by with neglect, making a companion of his loneliness. But, to drop all metaphor—where will you find a flower more interesting than a spinster of threescore and ten, of sixty, of fifty, or of forty? They have, indeed, "wasted their sweetness on the desert air." Some call them "old maids;" but it is a malicious appellation, unless it can be proved that they have refused to be wives. I would always take the part of a spinster; they are a peculiar people, far more "sinned against than sinning." Every blockhead thinks himself at liberty to crack a joke upon them; and when he says something, that he conceives to be wondrous smart, about Miss Such-an-One and her cat or poodle dog, he conceives himself a marvellous clever fellow; yea, even

those of her own sex who are below what is called a "certain age" (what that age is, I cannot tell), think themselves privileged to giggle at the expense of their elder sister. Now, though there may be a degree of peevishness (and it is not to be wondered at) amongst the sisterhood, yet with them you will find the most sensitive tenderness of heart, a delicacy that quivers, like the aspen leaf, at a breath, and a kindliness of soul that a mother might envy—or rather, for envy, shall I not write *imitate?* But ah! if their history were told, what a chronicle would it exhibit of blighted affections, withered hearts, secret tears, and midnight sighs!

The first spinster of whom I have a particular remembrance, as belonging to her caste, was Diana Darling. It is now six and twenty years since Diana paid the debt of nature, up to which period, and for a few years before, she rented a room in Chirnside. It was only a year or two before her death that I became acquainted with her; and I was then very young. But I never shall forget her kindness towards me. She treated me as though I had been her own child, or rather her grandchild, for she was then very little under seventy years of age. She had always an air of gentility about her; people called her "a betterish sort o' body." And, althoug *Miss* and *Mistress* are becoming general appellations now, twenty or thirty years ago, upon the Borders, those titles were only applied to particular persons or on particular occasions; and whether their more frequent use now is to be attributed to the schoolmaster being abroad or the dancing-master being abroad, I cannot tell, but Diana Darling, although acknowledged to be a "betterish sort o' body," never was spoken of by any other term but "auld Diana," or "auld Die." Well do I remember her flowing chintz gown, with short sleeves, her snow-white apron, her whiter cap, and old kid gloves, reaching to her elbows; and as well do I remember

how she took one of the common *blue cakes* which washer-women use, and tying it up in a piece of woollen cloth, dipped it in water, and daubed it round and round the walls of her room, to give them the appearance of being papered. I have often heard of and seen *stenciling* since; but, rude as the attempt was, I am almost persuaded that Diana was the first who put it in practice. To keep up gentility putteth people to strange shifts, and often to ridiculous ones—and to both of these extremities she was driven. But I have hinted that she was a kind-hearted creature; and, above all, do I remember her for the fine old ballads which she sang to me. But there was one that was an especial favourite with her, and a verse of which, if I remember correctly, ran thus—

"Fie, Lizzy Lindsay!
Sae lang in the mornins ye lie,
Mair fit ye was helping yer minny
To milk a' the ewes and the kye."

Diana, however, was a woman of some education; and to a relative she left a sort of history of her life, from which the following is an extract:—

"My father died before I was eighteen (so began Diana's narrative), and he left five of us—that is, my mother, two sisters, a brother, and myself—five hundred pounds a-piece. My sisters were both younger than me; but, within six years after our father's death, they both got married; and my brother, who was only a year older than myself, left the house also, and took a wife, so that there was nobody but me and my mother left. Everybody thought there was something very singular in this; for it was not natural that the youngest should be taken and the auldest left; and, besides, it was acknowledged that I was the best faured,* and the best tempered in the family; and there

* Best-looking, or most beautiful.

could be no dispute but that my siller was as good as theirs.

I must confess, however, that, when I was but a lassie o' sixteen, I had drawn up wi' one James Laidlaw—but I should score out the word *one*, and just say that I had drawn up wi' *James Laidlaw*. He was a year, or maybe three, aulder than me, and I kenned him when he was just a laddie, at Mr. Wh—'s school in Dunse; but I took no notice o' him then in particular, and, indeed, I never did, until one day that I was an errand down by Kimmerghame, and I met James just coming out frae the gardens. It was the summer season, and he had a posie in his hand, and a very bonny posie it was. 'Here's a fine day, Diana,' says he. 'Yes, it is,' says I.

So we said nae mair for some time; but he keepit walking by my side, and at last he said—'What do ye think o' this posie?' 'It is very bonny, James,' said I. 'I think sae,' quoth he; 'and if ye will accept it, there should naebody be mair welcome to it.' 'Ou, I thank ye,' said I, and I blushed in a way—'why should ye gie me it?' 'Never mind,' says he, 'tak it for auld acquaintance sake—we were at the school together.'

So I took the flowers, and James keepit by my side, and cracked to me a' the way to my mother's door, and I cracked to him—and I really wondered that the road between Kimmerghame and Dunse had turned sae short. It wasna half the length that it used to be, or what I thought it ought to be.

But I often saw James Laidlaw after this; and somehow or other I aye met him just as I was coming out o' the kirk, and weel do I recollect that, one Sabbath in particular, he said to me—'Diana, will ye no come out and tak a walk after ye get your dinner?' 'I dinna ken, James,' says I; 'I doubt I daurna, for our folk are very particular, and baith my faither and my mother are terribly against ony-

thing like gaun about stravaigin on the Sundays.' 'Oh, they need never ken where ye're gaun,' says he. 'Weel, I'll try,' says I, for by this time I had a sort o' liking for James. 'Then,' said he, 'I'll be at the Penny Stane at four o'clock.' 'Very weel,' quoth I.

And, although baith my faither and mother said to me, as I was gaun out—'Where are ye gaun, lassie?'—'Oh, no very far,' said I; and, at four o'clock, I met James at the Penny Stane. I shall never forget the grip that he gied my hand when he took it in his, and said—

'Ye hae been as good as your word, Diana.'

We wandered awa doun by Wedderburn dyke, till we came to the Blackadder, and then we sauntered down by the river side, till we were opposite Kelloe—and, oh, it was a pleasant afternoon. Everything round about us, aboon us, and among our feet, seemed to ken it was Sunday—everything but James and me. The laverock was singing in the blue lift—the blackbirds were whistling in the hedges—the mavis chaunted its loud sang frae the bushes on the braes—the lennerts* were singing and chirming among the whins—and the shelfa† absolutely seemed to follow ye wi' its three notes over again, in order that ye might learn them.

It was the happiest afternoon I ever spent. James grat, and I grat. I got a scolding frae my faither and my mother when I gaed hame, and they demanded to ken where I had been; but the words that James had spoken to me bore me up against their reproaches.

Weel, it was very shortly (I daresay not six months after my faither's death), that James called at my mother's, and as he said, to bid us *farewell!* He took my mother's hand—I mind I saw him raise it to his lips, while the tears were on his cheeks; and he was also greatly put about to part wi' my sisters; but to me he said—

* Linnets † Chaffinch

'Ye'll set me down a bit, Diana.'

He was to take the coach for Liverpool—or at least, a coach to take him on the road to that town, the next day; and from there he was to proceed to the West Indies, to meet an uncle who was to make him his heir.

I went out wi' him, and we wandered away down by our auld walks; but, oh, he said little, and he sighed often, and his heart was sad. But mine was as sad as his, and I could say as little as him. I winna, I canna write a' the words and the vows that passed. He took the chain frae his watch, and it was o' the best gold, and he also took a pair o' Bibles frae his pocket, and he put the watch chain and the Bibles into my hand, and—'Diana,' said he, 'take these, dear—keep them for the sake o' your poor James, and, as often as ye see them, think on him.' I took them, and wi' the tears running down my cheeks—'O James,' cried I, 'this is hard!—hard!'

Twice, ay thrice, we bade each other '*farewell*,' and thrice, after he had parted frae me, he cam running back again, and, throwing his arms round my neck, cried—

'Diana! I canna leave ye!—promise me that ye will never marry onybody else!'

And thrice I promised him that I wouldna.

But he gaed awa, and my only consolation was looking at the Bibles, on one o' the white leaves o' the first volume o' which I found written, by his own hand, '*James Laidlaw and Diana Darling vowed, that, if they were spared, they would become man and wife; and that neither time, distance, nor circumstances, should dissolve their plighted troth. Dated, May 25th, 17—.*'

These were cheering words to me; and I lived on them for years, even after my younger sisters were married, and I had ceased to hear from him. And, during that time, for his sake, I had declined offers which my friends said I was waur than foolish to reject. At least half a

dozen good matches I let slip through my hands, and a' for the love o' James Laidlaw who was far awa, and the vows he had plighted to me by the side o' the Blackadder. And, although he hadna written to me for some years, I couldna think that ony man could be so wicked as to write words o' falsehood and bind them up in the volume o' everlasting truth.

But, about ten years after he had gane awa, James Laidlaw came back to our neighbourhood; but he wasna the same lad he left—for he was now a dark-complexioned man, and he had wi' him a mulatto woman, and three bairns that called him *faither!* He was no longer my James!

My mother was by this time dead, and I expected naething but that the knowledge o' his faithlessness would kill me too—for I had clung to hope till the last straw was broken.

I met him once during his stay in the country, and, strange to tell, it was within a hundred yards o' the very spot where I first foregathered wi' him, when he offered me the posie.

'Ha! Die!' said he, 'my old girl, are you still alive? I'm glad to see you. Is the old woman, your mother, living yet?' I was ready to faint, my heart throbbed as though it would have burst. A' the trials I had ever had were naething to this; and he continued—'Why, if I remember right, there was once something like an old flame between you and me.' 'O James! James!' said I, 'do you remember the words ye wrote in the Bible, and the vows that ye made me by the side of the Blackadder?' 'Ha! ha!' said he, and he laughed, 'you are there, are you? I do mind something of it. But, Die, I did not think that a girl like you would have been such a fool as to remember what a boy said to her.'

I would have spoken to him again; but I remembered

he was the husband of another woman—though she was a mulatto—an' I hurried away as fast as my fainting heart would permit. I had but one consolation, and that was, that, though he had married another, naebody could compare her face wi' mine.

But it was lang before I got the better o' this sair slight—ay, I may say it was ten years and mair; and I had to try to pingle and find a living upon the interest o' my five hundred pounds, wi' ony other thing that I could turn my hand to in a genteel sort o' way.

I was now getting on the wrang side o' eight and thirty; and that is an age when it isna prudent in a spinister to be throwing the pouty side o' her lip to any decent lad that hauds out his hand, and says—'Jenny, will ye tak me?' Often and often, baith by day and by night, did I think o' the good bargains I had lost, for the sake o' my fause James Laidlaw; and often, when I saw some o' them that had come praying to me, pass me on a Sunday, having their wives wi' their hands half round their waist on the horse behint them—'O James! fause James!' I have said, 'but for trusting to you, and it would hae been me that would this day been riding behint Mr. ——.'

But I had still five hundred pounds, and sic fend as I could make, to help what they brought to me. And, about this time, there was one that had the character of being a very respectable sort o' a lad, one Walter Sanderson; he was a farmer, very near about my own age, and altogether a most prepossessing and intelligent young man. I first met wi' him at my youngest sister's goodman's kirn,* and I must say, a better or a more gracefu' dancer I never saw upon a floor. He had neither the jumping o' a mountebank, nor the sliding o' a play-actor, but there was an ease in his carriage which I never saw equalled. I was particularly struck wi' him, and especially his dancing; and it

* Harvest Home.

so happened that he was no less struck wi' me. I thought he looked even better than James Laidlaw used to do—but at times I had doubts about it. However, he had stopped all the night at my brother-in-law's as weel as mysel; and when I got up to gang hame the next day, he said he would bear me company. I thanked him, and said I was obliged to him, never thinking that he would attempt such a thing. But, just as the pony was brought out for me to ride on (and the callant was to come up to Dunse for it at night), Mr. Walter Sanderson mounted his horse, and says he—

'Now, wi' your permission, Miss Darling, I will see you hame.'

It would hae been very rude o' me to hae said—'No, I thank you, sir,' and especially at my time o' life, wi' twa younger sisters married that had families; so I blushed, as it were, and giein my powny a twitch, he sprang on to his saddle, and came trotting along by my side. He was very agreeable company; and, when he said, 'I shall be most happy to pay you a visit, Miss Darling,' I didna think o' what I had said, until after that I had answered him, 'I shall be very happy to see ye, sir.' And when I thought o' it my very cheek bones burned wi' shame.

But, howsoever, Mr. Sanderson was not long in calling again—and often he did call, and my sisters and their guidmen began to jeer me about him. Weel, he called and called, for I daresay as good as three quarters of a year; and he was sae backward and modest a' the time that I thought him a very remarkable man; indeed, I began to think him every way superior to James Laidlaw.

But at last he made proposals—I consented—the wedding-day was set, and we had been cried in the kirk. It was the fair day, just two days before we were to be married, and he came into the house, and, after he had been seeted a while, and cracked in his usual kind way—

'Oh,' says he, 'what a bargain I hae missed the day! There are four lots o' cattle in the market, and I might hae cleared four hundred pounds, cent. per cent., by them.'

'Losh me! Walter, then,' says I, 'why didna ye do it? How did ye let sic a bargain slip through your fingers?'

'Woman,' said he, 'I dinna ken; but a man that is to be married within eight and forty hours is excusable. I came to the Fair without any thought o' either buying or selling—but just to see you, Diana—and I kenned there wasna meikle siller necessary for that.'

'Losh, Walter, man,' said I, 'but that is a pity—and ye say ye could mak cent. per cent. by the beasts?'

''Deed could I,' quoth he—'I am sure o' that.'

'Then, Walter,' says I, 'what is mine the day is to be yours the morn, I may say; and it would be a pity to lose sic a bargain.'

Therefore I put into his hands an order on a branch bank, that had been established in Dunse, for every farthing that I was worth in the world, and Walter kissed me, and went out to get the money frae the bank and buy the cattle.

But he hadna been out an hour, when ane o' my brothers-in-law called, and I thought he looked unco dowie. So I began to tell him about the excellent bargain that Walter had made, and what I had done. But the man started frae his seat as if he were crazed, and, without asking me ony questions, he only cried—'Gracious! Diana! hae ye been sic an idiot?' and, rushing out o' the house, ran to the bank.

He left me in a state that I canna describe; I neither kenned what to do nor what to think. But within half an hour he returned, and he cried out as he entered—'Diana, ye are ruined! He has taken in you and everybody else. The villain broke yesterday. He is off! Ye may bid fare-weel to your siller!' 'Wha is off?' cried I, and I was in

sic a state I was hardly able to speak. 'Walter Sanderson!' answered my brother-in-law.

I believe I went into hysterics; for the first thing I mind o' after his saying so, was a dozen people standing round about me—some slapping at the palms o' my hands, and others laving water on my breast and temples, until they had me as wet as if they had douked me in Pollock's Well.

I canna tell how I stood up against this clap o' misery. It was near getting the better o' me. For a time I really hated the very name and the sight o' man, and I said, as the song says, that

Men are a' deceivers.'

But this was not the worst o' it—I had lost my all, and I was now forced into the acquaintanceship of poverty and dependence. I first went to live under the roof o' my youngest sister, who had always been my favourite; but, before six months went round, I found that she began to treat me just as though I had been a servant, ordering me to do this and do the other; and sometimes my dinner was sent ben to me into the kitchen; and the servant lassies, seeing how their mistress treated me, considered that they should be justified in doing the same—and they did the same. Many a weary time have I lain down upon my bed and wished never to rise again, for my spirit was weary o' this world. But I put up wi' insult after insult, until flesh and blood could endure it no longer. Then did I go to my other sister, and she hardly opened her mouth to me as I entered her house. I saw that I might gang where I liked—I wasna welcome there. Before I had been a week under her roof, I found that the herd's dog led a lady's life to mine. I was forced to leave her too.

And, as a sort o' last alternative, just to keep me in existence, I began a bit shop in a neighbouring town, and took in sewing and washing; and, after I had tried them

awhile, and found that they would hardly do, I commenced a bit school, at the advice of the minister's wife, and learned bairns their letters and the catechism, and knitting and sewing. I also taught them (for they were a' girls) how to work their samplers, and to write, and to cast accounts. But what vexed and humbled me more than all I had suffered, was, that one night, just after I had let my scholars away, an auld hedger and ditcher body, almost sixty years o' age, came into the house, and 'How's a' wi' ye the nicht?' says he, though I had never spoken to the man before. But he took off his bonnet, and, pulling in a chair, drew a seat to the fire. I was thunderstruck! But I was yet mair astonished and ashamed, when the auld body, sleeking down his hair and his chin, had the assurance to make love to me!

'There is the door, sir!' cried I. And when he didna seem willing to understand me, I gripped him by the shouthers, and showed him what I meant.

Yet quite composedly he turned round to me and said, 'I dinna see what is the use o' the like o' this—it is true I am aulder than you, but you are at a time o' life now that ye canna expect ony young man to look at ye. Therefore, ye had better think twice before ye turn me to the door. Ye will find it just as easy a life being the wife o' a hedger as keeping a school—rather mair sae I apprehend, and mair profitable too.' I had nae patience wi' the man. I thought my sisters had insulted me; but this offer o' the hedger's wounded me mair than a' that they had done.

'O James Laidlaw!' cried I, when I was left to mysel, 'what hae ye brought me to! My sisters dinna look after me. My parting wi' them has gien them an excuse to forget that I exist. My brother is far frae me, and he is ruled by a wife; and I hae been robbed by another o' the little that I had. I am like a withered tree in a wilderness, standing its lane—I will fa' and naebody will miss me. I

am sick, and there are none to haud my head. My throat is parched and my lips dry, and there are none to bring me a cup o' water. There is nae *living thing* that I can ca' mine. And some day I shall be found a stiffened corpse in my bed, with no one near me to close my eyes in death or perform the last office of humanity! For I am alone—I am by myself—I am forgotten in the world; and my latter years, if I have a long life, will be a burden to strangers.'"

But Diana Darling did not so die. Her gentleness, her kindness, caused her to be beloved by many who knew not her history; and, when the last stern messenger came to call her hence, many watched with tears around her bed of death, and many more in sorrow followed her to the grave. So ran the few leaves in the diary of a spinster—and the reader will forgive our interpolations.

GEORDIE WILLISON,

AND THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE GOWER.

ANTIQUARIES know very well that one of the oldest of the Nova Scotia knights, belonging to Scotland, was Sir Marmaduke Maitland of Castle Gower, situated in one of the southern counties of the kingdom; but they may not know so well that Sir Marmaduke held his property under a strict entail to heirs male, whom failing, to heirs female, under the condition of bearing the arms and name of the Castle Gower family; or that he was married to Catherine Maxwell, a near relative of the family of Herries, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright—a person of no very great beauty, but sprightly, and of good manners. This woman had been brought up in France, and was deeply tinged with French feelings. She had French cooks and French milliners about her in abundance; and a French lackey was considered by her as indispensable as meat and drink. Then she was represented as being a proud, imperious woman, with a bad temper; which was rendered worse by her continued fretting, in consequence of not having any children to her husband; whereby the property would go away to a son of her husband's brother. Sir Marmaduke and his lady had a town-house in Edinburgh, in which they lived for the greater part of the year, situated so as to look to the North Back of the Canongate, and with an entry to it from that street, but the principal gate was from the north side. A garden was attached to the house; and the stables and coach-houses were situated at the foot of the

garden. All these premises are now removed; but Sir Marmaduke Maitland's house—or, as it was styled, the Duke's house—at the period of this story, was a very showy house, and very well known to the inhabitants of Edinburgh.

Now, at the foot of Leith Wynd, there lived, about the same time, a poor widow woman, called Widow Willison, who had a son and a daughter. She was the widow of a William Willison, who earned a livelihood by the humble means of serving the inhabitants of Edinburgh with water, which he conveyed to their doors by the means of an ass; and was, in consequence, called Water Willie—a good, simple, honest creature; much liked by his customers, from whom he never wanted a good diet; and had no fault, but that of disliking the element in which he dealt. He liked he said very well to drive water to the great folks, and he wished them "meikle guid o't; but, for his ain pairt, he preferred whisky, which, he thocht, was o' a warmer and mair congenial nature, and better suited to the inside o' a rational animal, like man."

Strange enough, it was to William Willison's dislike to water that people attributed his death. It would have been more logical—but scandal is a bad logician—to have debited that event to the water; for, though it will not conceal that Willie was drunk when he died, it was as notorious that it was not because he was drunk that he died—but that he died because his water-cart went over him when he was drunk. However that may be, and there is no use in wasting much reasoning on the point, William left, at his death, a widow and two children, with nothing to support them.

Widow Willison was a good, religious woman, of the old school, believing in the transcendent influence of mere faith, as carrying along with it all the minor points of justification by works, election, and others, in the same way

that a river takes with it the drops of rain that fall from the heavens, and carries all down to the ocean. She was an excellent example of the influence of a pure religion—kind and generous in her sentiments; and, though left with two children, and no food to satisfy their hunger, patient and hopeful—placing implicit trust and confidence in the Author of all good, and viewing murmuring as a sin against His providence.

Let us introduce, now, George Willison, her son, an extraordinary individual, apparently destined to be more notorious than his father, in so much as his character was composed of that mixture of simplicity, bordering on silliness, and shrewd sagacity in the ordinary affairs of life, which is often observed in people of Scotland. Though common, the character is nearly inexplicable to the analyst; for the individual seems conscious of the weaker part of his character, but he appears to love it, and often makes it subservient to the stronger elements of his mind, by using it at once as a cloak and a foil to them. George, like the other individuals of his peculiar species, followed no trade. Sometimes he acted as a cadie, a letter-carrier, a messenger, a porter, a water-carrier—in any capacity, in short, in which he could, with no continuous labour, earn a little money. To work at any given thing for longer time than a day, was a task which he generally condemned, as being wearisome and monotonous, and more suited to the inferior animals than to man. His clothes, like his avocations, were many-coloured, and suited the silly half of his character, without altogether depriving him of the rights of a citizen, or making him the property and sport of school-boys. Like his employments, his earnings were chancy and various, ranging between a shilling to five shillings a-week, including gratuities, which his conceit prompted him to call "helps," with a view to avoid the imputation of living upon alms—a name, in the Scotch

language "awmous," which did not sound agreeably in the ears of Geordie Willison.

The very reverse of George was his sister—a black-eyed beauty, of great intelligence, who earned a little money, to support the family, by means of her needle. She was a great comfort to her mother, seldom going out, and felt much annoyed by the strange character of her brother, whom she often endeavoured to improve, with a view to his following some trade. He was twenty years of age, and if he did not "tak' himself up" now, she said, "he would be a vagrant a' his days." Geordie, on the other hand, quietly heard his sister, but he never saw—at least, he pretended not to see, which was the same thing—the force of her argument. The weak half of his constitution was always presented to any attack of logic; and the adroitness with which he met his opponent by this soft buckler—which, like a feather-bed presented to a canon bullet, swallowed the force and the noise at the same time—was worthy of Aristotle, or Thomas Scotus, or any other logical warrior Take an example:—

"Whar hae ye been the day, Geordie?" said his mother to him one day.

"I hae been convoying Sir Marmaduke Maitland a wee bit on his way to France," said Geordie. "He asked me to bear him company and carry his luggage to Leith, and I couldna refuse sic a favour to the braw knight."

"An' what got ye frae him?" said his mother; "for I hae naething i' the house for supper."

"Twa or three placks," said Geordie, throwing down some coppers on the table.

"This is the 21st day o' April—your birthday, Geordie," said the mother; "an' as it has aye been our practice to hae something by common on that occasion, I'll gang down to Widow Johnston's an' get a pint o' the best, to drink yer health wi'." And Widow Willison did as she said.

"Is Lady Maitland no awa wi' Sir Marmaduke, Geordie?" resumed his mother, when they were taking their meagre supper.

"Na! na!" said Geordie; "they dinna like ane anither sae weel; an' I dinna wonder at Sir Marmaduke no likin' her, for I dinna like her mysel."

"For what reason, Geordie?" asked his mother.

"Because she doesna like me," answered the casuist.

Now it happened that on the 19th day of February, after the conversation here detailed, that George Willison was wandering over the grounds of Warriston, on the north side of Edinburgh. He had been with a letter to the Laird of Warriston, and, in coming back, as was not uncommon with him, was musing, in a half dreaming, listless kind of state, as he sauntered through the planted grounds in the neighbourhood. His attention was in an instant arrested by the sounds of voices, and he stood, or rather sat down, behind a hedge and listened. The speakers were very near to him; for it was so very dark that they could not observe him.

"I will stand at a little distance, Louise," said a voice, "and thou canst do the thing thyself. I could despatch thine, but I cannot do that good work to myself; for the mother rises in me, and unnerves me quite. Besides, thou didst promise to do me this service for the ten gold pieces I gave thee, and the many more I will yet give thee."

"*Oui! oui!* my lady; but de infant is so *fort*, so trong, dat it will be difficult for me to trottle her. Death, *la mort*, does not come ever when required; but I vill do my endeavour to trangle de leetle jade, vit as much activity as I can. Ha! ha! de leetle baggage tinks she is already *perdir*—she tombles so—be quiet, you *petite* leetle deevil. It vill be de best vay, I tink, to do it on de ground. Hark! is dere not some person near?—my heart goes *en palpitant.*"

"It is nobody, thou fool," answered the lady; "it is only

a rustling produced by a breath of wind among the trees."

"Very vell, very vell, my Lady Maitland; dat is right. Now for de vork."

"Stop until I am at a little distance; and, when thou hearest me cry 'Now,' finish the thing cleverly."

The rustling of the lady's gown betokened that she had done as she said. The rustling ceased; and the word "Now," came from the mouth of the mother.

All was silent for a minute; a quick breath, indicating the application of a strong effort, was now heard, mixed with the sound of a convulsed suspiration, something like that of a child labouring under hooping-cough, though weaker. The rustling of clothes indicated a struggle of some violence; and several ejaculations escaped at intervals: —"*Mon dieu!* dis is de *triste* vork; how trong de leetle she velp is!—now, now—not yet—how trange!—*diable!* she still breats!"

"Hast thou finished, Louise?" asked the lady, impatiently.

"Not yet, my lady," said Louise; give me your hair necklace; de leetle she velp vont die vitout tronger force dan my veak hands can apply."

"I cannot go to thee," said the lady; "thou must come to me. Lay the babe on the ground, and come for the necklace."

Louise did as she was desired.

The sounds of a struggle again commenced, mixed with Louise's ejaculations:—"Now, now—dis vill do for you—*une fois*—vonce, twice, trice round—dat vill do—quite sufficient to kill de giant, or Sir Marmaduke himself. Now, my lady, I tink de ting is pretty vell done; I vill trow her into de hedge—dere—now, let us go."

The two ladies went away, and Geordie rushed forward to the place where they had thrown the child. It was still

convulsed. He loosened the necklace, which had been left by mistake, and blew strongly into the child's mouth. He heard it sigh, and in a little time breathe; and, carrying it with the greatest care, he took it home with him to his mother's house.

"Whar hae ye been, man, and what is this ye hae in your airms?" said Widow Willison to Geordie, when he went in.

"It's a wee bit birdie I fand in a nest amang the hedges o' Warriston," said Geordie. "Its mither didna seem to care aboot it, and I hae brought it hame wi' me. Gie't a pickle crowdie, puir thing."

Astonished, and partly displeased, Widow Willison took the child out of her son's arms, and seeing its face swoln and blue, and marks of strangulation on its neck, her maternal sympathies arose, and she applied all the articles of a mother's pharmacopœia with a view to restore it.

"But whar got ye the bairn, man?" she again inquired. "Gie us nane o' yer nonsense about birds and hedges. Tell us the story sae as plain folk can understand it."

"I hae already tauld ye," said Geordie, dryly and slowly; "and it's no my intention at present to tell ye ony mair aboot it. Ye didna ask whar *I* came frae when ye got me first."

"An' wha's to bring up the bairn?" asked the mother, who knew it was in vain to put the same question twice to Geordie.

"Ye didna ask that question at my faither when *I* cam hame," replied the stoic, with one of his peculiar looks; "but, if ye had, maybe ye wadna hae got sae kind an answer as I'll gie ye: Geordie Willison will pay for bringing up the bairn; and I'll no answer ony mair o' yer questions."

Strictly did Geordie keep his word with his mother. He would tell neither her nor his sister anything about the child. They knew his temper and disposition, and gra

dually resigned an importunity which had the effect of making him more obstinate. At night, when the child's clothes were taken off, with a view to putting it to bed, Geordie got hold of them and carried them off, unknown to his mother. He locked them up in his chest, and, in the morning, when his mother asked him if he had seen them, he said he knew nothing about them. Annoyed by this conduct on the part of her son, his mother threatened to throw the child upon the parish as a foundling; and yet, when she reflected on the extreme sagacity which was mixed up with her son's peculiarities, and read in his looks, which she well understood, a more than ordinary confidence of power to do what he had said, as to bringing up the child, she hesitated in her purpose, and at last resolved to go in with the humour and inclinations of her son, and do the duty of a mother to the babe.

We now change the scene.

"It's a braw day this, my Leddy Maitland," said Geordie, bowing to the very ground, and holding in his hand a clean sheet of paper, which he had folded up like a letter, as a passport to her ladyship's presence.

Lady Maitland, who was sitting at her work-table, stared at the person thus saluting her, and seeing it was Geordie Willison, who had offended her at the time of his carrying down Sir Marmaduke's luggage, by asking, jocularly, if "ony o' the bairns were gaun wi' their father," she asked him sternly what he wanted, and, thinking he had the letter in his hand to deliver to her, snatched it in a petted manner and opened it. On finding it a clean sheet of paper, with her address on the back of it, she got into a great rage, and ran to the bell to call up a lackey to kick Geordie down stairs.

"Canny, my braw leddy—canny," said Geordie, seizing her hand; "ye are hasty—maybe no quite recovered yet—the wet dews o' Warriston are no for the tender health

o' the bonny Leddy Maitland; for even Geordie Willison, wha can ban a' bield i' the cauldest nicht o' winter, felt them chill and gruesone as he passed through them yestreen."

On hearing this speech, Lady Maitland changed, in an instant, from a state of violent passion to the rigidity and appearance of a marble statue.

Eyeing her with one of his peculiar looks, as much as to say, "I know all," Geordie proceeded.

"I dinna want to put your leddyship to ony trouble by this veesit; but, being in want o' some siller in thir hard times, I thocht I would tak the liberty o' ca'in upon yer leddyship, as weel for the sake o' being better acquainted wi' a leddy o' yer station and presence, as for the sake o' gettin' the little I require on my first introduction to high life."

"How much money dost thou require?" asked the lady, with a tremulous voice.

"Twunty pund, my leddy, twenty pund at the present time," answered Geordie, with the same simple look; "ye ken the folk haud me for a natural, and ower fu' a cup is no easy carried, even by the wise. Sae, I wadna like to trust mysel' wi' mair than twenty pund at a time."

Without saying a word, Lady Maitland went, with trembling steps, and a hurried and confused manner, to her bureau: she took out her keys—tried one, then another, and, with some difficulty, at last got it opened. She counted out twenty pounds, and handed it over to Geordie, who counted it again with all the precision of a modern banker.

"Thank ye, my leddy," said Geordie; "an' whan I need mair, I'll just tak the liberty o' makin yer leddyship my banker. Guid day, my leddy." And, with a low bow, reaching nearly to the ground, he departed.

The result of this interview satisfied Geordie that what he had suspected was true. Sir Marmaduke had not yet

returned, and his lady, having been unfaithful to him, and given birth to a child, had resolved upon putting it out of the way, in the manner already detailed. He had no doubt that the lady thought the child was dead; and he did not wish, in the meantime, to disturb that notion; for, although he knew that the circumstance of the child being alive would give him greater power over her, in the event of her becoming refractory, he was apprehensive that she would not have allowed the child to remain in his keeping; and might, in all likelihood, resort to some desperate scheme to destroy it.

On returning home, Geordie drew his seat to the fire, and sat silent. His mother, who was sitting opposite to him, asked him if he had earned any money that day, wherewith he could buy some clothes for the child he had undertaken to bring up. With becoming gravity, and without appearing to feel that any remarkable change had taken place upon his finances, Geordie slowly put his hand into his pocket, drew out the twenty pounds, and gave his mother one for interim expenditure. As he returned the money into his pocket, he said, with an air of the most supreme nonchalance, "If ye want ony mair, ye can let me ken."

The mother and daughter looked at each other with surprise and astonishment, mixed with some pleasure, and, perhaps, some apprehension. Neither of them put any question as to where the money had been got; for Geordie's look had already informed them that any such question would not be answered.

Meanwhile, no great change seemed to have been produced in Geordie Willison's manner of living, in consequence of his having become comparatively rich. He lounged about the streets, joking with his acquaintances—went his messages—sometimes appeared with a crowd of boys after him—dressed in the same style—and, altogether, was just the same kind of person he used to be.

Time passed, and precisely on the same day next year he went to Lady Maitland's. In the passage, he was met by the housekeeper, Louise Grecourt, who asked him what he wanted. He looked at her intently, and recognised in this person's voice the same tones which had arrested his ears so forcibly on the night of the attempted murder of the child. To make himself more certain of this, Geordie led her into conversation.

"I want my Leddy Maitland," answered Geordie—"are ye her leddyship?"

"No," answered the housekeeper, with a kick of her head, which Geordie took as a sign that his bait had been swallowed; "I am not Lady Maitland—I am in de charge of her ladyship's house. Vat you vant vit her ladyship? Can Louise Grecourt not satisfy a fellow like you?"

"No exactly at present," answered Geordie; "tell her leddyship that Geordie Willison wants to speak to her."

Louise started when he mentioned his name, certifying Geordie that she was in the secret of his knowledge. Her manner changed. She became all condescension; and, leading him up stairs, opened a door, and showed him into a room where Lady Maitland was sitting.

"I houp yer leddyship," began Geordie, with a low bow, "has been quite weel sin' I had the honour o' yer acquaintanceship, whilk is now a year, come twa o'clock o' this day. Ye micht maybe be thinking we were gaun to fa' out o' acquaintanceship; but I'm no ane o' yer conceited creatures wha despise auld freends, and rin after new anes, merely because they may think them brawer—sae ye may keep yer mind easy on that score; and I wad farther tak the liberty to assure yer leddyship that, if ye hae ony siller by ye at present, I winna hesitate to gie ye a proof o' the continuance o' my freendship, by offerin' to tak frae ye as meikle as I may need."

"How much is that?" asked Lady Maitland.

"Twunty pund, my leddy, twunty pund," answered Geordie.

The money was handed to him by the lady, without saying a word; and, having again made a low bow, he departed.

Next year, Geordie Willison went and paid a visit to Lady Maitland, got from her the same sum of money, and nothing passed to indicate what it was paid for. The lady clearly remained under the impression that the child was not in existence.

It happened that, some time after the last payment, Geordie was on the pier of Leith, with a view to fall in with some chance message or carriage to Edinburgh. A vessel had newly arrived from the Continent, and one of the passengers was Sir Marmaduke Maitland. Geordie was employed to assist in getting his luggage removed to Edinburgh. On arriving at the house, Lady Maitland, with Louise behind her, was standing on the landing-place to receive her husband. They saw Geordie walking alongside of him, and talking to him in the familiar manner which his alleged silliness in many cases entitled him to do; but whatever they may have felt or expressed, by looks or otherwise, Geordie seemed not to be any way out of his ordinary manner, and they soon observed, from the conduct of Sir Marmaduke, that Geordie had said nothing to him. Geordie bustled about, assisting to take out the luggage, while Sir Marmaduke was standing in the lobby with his lady alongside of him.

"Is there any news stirring in these parts, Geordie, worth telling to one who has been from his own country so long as I have been."

"Naething worth mentioning, Sir Marmaduke," answered Geordie; "a'thing quiet, decent, and orderly i' the toun and i' the country—no excepting your ain house here, whar I hae missed mony a gude luck-penny sin' your honour departed."

"Has Lady Maitland not been in the habit of employing you, then, Geordie?" asked Sir Marmaduke.

"No exactly, Sir Marmaduke," answered Geordie; "the last time I ca'ed on her leddyship, she asked me what I wanted. I didna think it quite ceevil, and I haena gane back; but I canna deny that she paid me handsomely for the last thing I carried for her. She's a fine leddy, Sir Marmaduke, and meikle credit to ye."

At any subsequent period, when Geordie's yearly pension was due, he generally contrived to call for Lady Maitland when Sir Marmaduke was out of the way. He took always the same amount of money. The only departure he made from this custom was in the year of his sister's marriage, when he asked and got a sum of forty pounds, twenty of which he gave to her. Her husband, George Dempster, had at one time been a butler in Lady Maitland's family; but her ladyship did not know either that he was acquainted with George Willison, or that he was now married to his sister. We may explain that George Dempster was in the family at the time when Geordie brought home the child; and, in some of his conversations with his wife, he did not hesitate to say that he suspected that Lady Maitland bore a child to a French lackey, who was then about the house; but the child never made its appearance, and strong grounds existed for believing that it was made away with. Geordie himself sometimes heard these stories; but he affected to be altogether indifferent to them, putting a silly question to Dempster, as if he had just awakened from sleep, and had forgot the thread of the discourse, and, when he got his answer, pretending to fall asleep again.

In the meantime the young foundling, who had been christened Jessie Warriston, by Geordie's desire, grew up to womanhood. She became, in every respect, the picture of her mother—tall and noble in her appearance. Her hair was jet black, and her eye partook of the same colour.

with a lustre that dazzled the beholder. Her manners were cheerful and kind; and she was grateful for the most ordinary attentions paid to her by Widow Willison, or her daughter—the latter of whom often took her out with her to the house of Ludovic Brodie, commonly called Birkie-haugh, a nephew of Sir Marmaduke Maitland, with whom George Dempster was serving as butler, in his temporary house, about a mile south from Edinburgh.

This young laird had seen Jessie Warriston, and been struck with her noble appearance. He asked Dempster who she was, and was told that she was a young person who lived with one of his wife's friends. Brodie, whose character was that of a most unprincipled rake, often endeavoured to make up to Jessie, as she went backwards and forwards between his house and Widow Willison's. In all endeavours he had been unsuccessful; for Jessie—independently of being aware, from the admonitions of the pious Widow Willison, that an acquaintanceship with a person above her degree was improper and dangerous—had a lover of her own, a young man of the name of William Forbes, a clerk to Mr. Carstairs, an advocate, at that time in great practice at the Scotch bar. Forbes generally accompanied Jessie when she went out at night, after she told him that Brodie had insulted her; and she discontinued her visits to George Dempster.

Foiled by the precautions which Jessie took to avoid him, Brodie only became more determined to get his object gratified. He meditated various schemes for this purpose. He turned off Dempster, who might have been a spy upon his conduct; and it was remarked, by the people living near to Widow Willison's, that a woman, rolled up in a cloak, had been seen watching about the door. Geordie, though apparently not listening to any of these transactions, was all alive to the interests of his foundling. He kept a constant eye upon the neighbourhood, and did not fail to

observe, that a woman, of the description stated, came always, at a certain hour, near his mother's door, about the time that Jessie generally went out.

Now, Geordie was determined to know, by some means, who this woman was; and, as the day was drawing in, he thought he might disguise himself in such a way as to get into conversation with her.

Having equipped himself in the garb of a cadie, of more respectable appearance than he himself exhibited, and put a black patch over his eye, and a broad slouched hat over his head, Geordie took his station to watch the woman in the cloak.

"Wha may ye be waitin' for?" said Geordie, in a feigned voice, to the woman, whom he at last found.

"Are you von of de cadies?" asked the woman.

"Yes," answered Geordie.

"Do you live in de neighbourhood?" asked again the woman.

"I wadna live in ony ither place war ye to pay me for't," answered Geordie.

"Very good—dat is a very good answer," said the woman; "dere is a little money for you."

"I dinna tak siller for tellin' folk whar I live," said Geordie; "but, if there's onything else I can, in my capacity o' cadie, do for ye, maybe I may then condescend to tak yer siller."

"*Mon Dieu!* vat a trange fellow!" ejaculated the woman. "Vell, can you tell me if a young woman, carrying the name of Jessie Varriston, lives up dat stair?" pointing with her hand.

"I ken the lassie as weel as I ken mysel," answered Geordie; "she lives just whar ye hae said."

"Very goot—very goot—dat is just vat I vant—*un sage homme* dis—excellent goot chap. Now, tell me if de girl lives vit an imbecile that is von idiot, called George Villi-

son, and how long she has lived vit him, vere she comes from, and vat is her history."

"Ye hae asked four questions a' in ae breath," said Geordie, who wanted a prologue, to give him time to consider how much he could say, so as to serve the two purposes of safety and drawing out the woman at the same time. "It's no quite fair, to an ignorant man like me, to put sae mony questions at a time; but it's my wish to serve ye, an' I'll do my best to answer them. Jessie Warriston lives wi' the idiot cratur Geordie Willison's mither, and she has lived wi' her for seventeen years, that is, since she was a bit bairn. I'm thinking she'll be a granddochter o' Widow Willison's—dinna ye think sae yersel'?"

"De brute!" muttered the woman to herself—"de brute is begun, like all de rest of his countrymen, to put de interrogation ven he should give de respond. You do not know den de girl's history, do you not?"

"No, but maybe I may be able to get it for ye," answered Geordie, unwilling to be dismissed *simpliciter*.

"Very vell, anoter time—I vish you, in de meantime, to carry dis letter to Ludovic Brodie, Esq. of Birkiehaugh. Do you know vere he lives?"

"I will carry it wi' the greatest o' pleasure, madam," answered Geordie.

The woman handed him the letter, with some more money, and departed.

Geordie got the letter speedily read to him by a person in his confidence. It was in these terms:—

"Mon cher Ludovic,—Jessie Varriston lives vit de idiot, Geordie Villison, in Leit Vynd. De bearer of dis knows her very vell, and vill assist you in de abduction. My Lady Maitland and I both tink we know her too; bot we do not vish at present to let any von know dis, for certain reasons, vich we cannot explain to you. Ven you arrange vit de bearer to carry her off, let me know, and I vill do

every ting in my power to assist you, as my lady has a grand vish for de abduction of de vench vithout procrastination. My lady does not know of my having given you intelligence of her being up to de affair.—Yours till death.

"LOUISE GRECOURT."

From this letter, Geordie saw plainly that Lady Maitland and Louise had, at last, got some information regarding Jessie, which had led them to suspect that she was the child they had supposed to be dead. It was clear, however, that Brodie knew nothing of their suspicions, and the two parties were, undoubtedly, after the same game, with different objects and for different reasons. Having folded the letter and sealed it, so as to avoid suspicion, Geordie went out and delivered it into the hands of Birkiehaugh.

Brodie, having read the letter, examined Geordie from head to heel—"Canst thou be trusted, man, in an affair requiring secrecy and ability to execute it?" asked he.

"Do you see ony thing aboot me to produce ony doubt o' my ability or my secrecy?" answered Geordie. "Nae man will coup wi' Peter Finlayson in ony expedition whar death, danger, or exposure are to be avoided, or whar ability to plan, an' quickness to execute, and cunnin' to conceal, are things o' consideration or importance."

"Well, Peter, I believe thou art the man. I wish to carry off the girl, Jessie Warriston, to-morrow night—canst thou assist me in that enterprise?"

"It's just in the like o' thae bits o' ploys that the genius o' Peter Finlayson lies," answered Geordie. "I ken the lassie maist intimately, and can bring her to ony appointed spot at ony hour ye please to name."

"To-morrow night, then," said Brodie, "at eight o'clock, at the resting-stone at the top of the Leith Lone; knowest thou the place?"

"I do," answered Geordie; "and shall attend; but ye ken, I suppose, the difference that lies atween the ordinary

jobs o' us cadies, and the like o' thae michty emprises, whar life and limb, and honour and reputation, are concerned. In the first case, the pay comes after the wark—in the ither, the wark comes after the pay; an' it's richt natural, whan ye think o't; because I hae often seen the city guard kick the wark and the warkmen to the deevil in an instant, and the puir cadie gets only broken banes for his pains."

"There, then," said Brodie, "there is half of thy fee; the other shall be given when thou bringest the girl."

"Vera weel," said Geordie, counting the gold pieces; "and thank ye. I wunna fail in my duty, I warrant ye."

Next night, at the time and place appointed, Geordie attended with his charge. He found Brodie in waiting with a carriage, in which was seated Louise. Jessie was told to enter, and complied. Brodie jumped in, and Geordie held out his hand for the other half of the fee, which he received. He now slipped a piece of twine round the handle of the carriage, so as to prevent it from being opened; and, in a moment vaulted up beside the coachman, whose hat, as if by mere accident, he knocked off.

"Gie me up my bannet, ye whelp," said the coachman, angrily.

"Cadies are no cadies to coachmen," answered Geordie, dryly; "your brains maun be far spent, man, when they canna keep a house ower their head."

The coachman jumped down for his hat, and Geordie, applying the whip to the horses, was off in an instant. The coachman cried, "Stop the coach!" Brodie, thinking it was a chase, cried to drive like the devil. Geordie obeyed to the letter, and dashed on like lightning.

The coach stopped, and was instantly surrounded by a number of people, who opened the door, and pulling the three inmates out, led them into a large building, the door of which was double-bolted, and made a tremendous noise as it revolved on its hinges. The party were taken up

stairs, and introduced (Geordie leading the way with his hat in his hand) into a large room, where several people were present, apparently waiting for them.

"I beg leave to introduce," said Geordie, bowing low, "to yer lordship, the sheriff—wha has dune us the honour to receive us at this time in sae safe a place as the jail, whar we are perfectly free frae a' interruption—his honour, Ludovic Brodie, Esq. o' Birkiehaugh, and her highness, Louise Grecourt, a French leddy o' repute. They are anxious to receive yer opinion on a point o' law, in whilk they are personally concerned, a favour, I doutna, yer honour will condescend to grant."

The sheriff immediately set about taking a precognition, for which he had been, by Geordie, previously prepared. Brodie was committed on a charge of abduction; but Louise, on the intercession of Geordie and his ward, was allowed to get off. Some time afterwards, Brodie was tried, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

Geordie had now occasion to call upon Lady Maitland for his yearly allowance. Louise having been liberated without trial, it had not yet reached the ears of her or Lady Maitland that Peter Finlayson was, in fact, Geordie Willison. Brodie had made no communication of that fact as yet, and neither Louise nor Lady Maitland could have any idea that Geordie knew of the hand they had in the attempted abduction, or of their knowledge or suspicion that Jessie Warriston was the intended victim of their cruelty.

"My leddy," began Geordie, with his accustomed bow, but with more than his usual significancy of look, "this is the first time for these seventeen years that I hae been awantin' in my attention and duty as yer leddyship's freend; for I am ae day ahint the usual time o' my veesit to yer leddyship, for whilk mark o' disrespect I beg leave to solicit yer leddyship's pardon, upon the condition that I

offer, that I shall promise, as I here most solemnly do, that I shall not be again wantin' in my duty to yer leddyship. Can I say I hae yer leddyship's pardon?"

Crucified by Geordie's cruel humour, but compelled to be silent, Lady Maitland signified her favour.

"Yer leddyship's condescension is a great relief to me," resumed Geordie. "They say Sir Marmaduke's nevey, Brodie o' Birkiehaugh, is in jail for attempting to rin awa' wi' a young lassie. What he was to do wi' her, God only kens, but there can be nae doubt that he would get sma' favour and grace frae yer leddyship to ony attempt on the puir cratur's life. Na, na—a nobility sae michtie as yer leddyship's, an' a saftness o' heart whilk far excels that o' the bleatin' ewe for the puir lambie that lies deein' by its side, couldna patroneeze onything like the takin' awa o' God's breath frae the nostrils o' innocence."

Geordie, whose cruelty was refined, paused, and fixed his eyes on the lady, who appeared to be in agony. She rose quickly, and went, as usual, to her bureau to give him money.

"Stop," said Geordie; "I haena asked ye for't yet. I dinna like awmous. It's only when I want to favour yer leddyship that I tak siller fra ye, and naething I hae yet said could warrant yer leddyship in supposing that I was to confer sic a favour on ye, at least at the particular time when ye rose to open yer kist; and I dinna need to say, that favours quickly conferred are sune repented o'. Weel, the bit lassie wham Birkiehaugh was after, is a young creature, ca'ed Jessie Warriston, wha lives wi' my mither. Few folk on earth ken meikle about her; but my mither swears that her mither maun hae been hanged, for she has a ring round her bonny white craig, like that on the neck o' the turtle doo. I laugh, an' say to the bonny bairn, that it will stan' in place o' a coral or cornelian necklace to her.—Ha! ha! I see your leddyship's inclined to laugh too—eh?"

And Geordie again eyed the lady, who was as far from laughing as the criminal at the stake.

"Weel," resumed the crucifier, "Birkiehaugh didna succeed—thanks to Peter Finlayson, honest fallow—and the lassie is safe again; but I hae made a vow, and I hope sae gude a ane will be regularly recorded whar it should be, that the first person wha tries to lay sae meikle as a finger on that bonny bairn's head, or blaw a single breath o' suspicion against her reputation, will meet wi' the just indignation o' Geordie Willison. An' noo, my leddy, I will favour ye by accepting, at yer hands, twenty pund."

Geordie received, and counted the money, as usual, and, with a bow, retired.

The six months of Birkiehaugh's confinement expired, and, about the same time, Sir Marmaduke Maitland died. Having had no children by his wife, the title and fine property of Castle Gower fell to Brodie, who was his brother's son—Brodie being the name of the family who had succeeded to the title. No time was lost by Brodie's man of business to take out a brief from Chancery, for getting him served heir male of taillie to the estate and honours. The brief was published, and no doubt anywhere prevailed of the verdict which would be pronounced under it.

About this time it was observed that Geordie Willison had long interviews with Advocate Carstairs; but neither his mother, nor his sister, nor, indeed, any person, could get him to say a word on the subject. His manner, in regard to the story of Jessie, had been all along quite uniform, and many years had passed since his mother had given up in despair all attempts to get him to divulge it. He was, at present, apparently very absent, as if something of great importance occupied his mind.

One day, on leaving the advocate, he went direct for the

house of Lady Maitland. He was admitted as usual. He said he wished to see her ladyship and Louise together.

"I hae heard," began Geordie, "that my worthy freend, Sir Marmaduke, is dead. He was a gude man, and may the Lord deal mercifully wi' him! Ludovic Brodie, they say, is the heir, an' I dinna say he has nae richt to that title—though, maybe, it may cost some wigs a pickle flour to mak that oot. Noo, ye see, my Leddy Maitland, I hae dune ye some favours, and I'm just to take the liberty to ask ane in return. You an' yer freend, Louise, maun admit, in open court, that yer leddyship bore, upon the 19th day of February o' the year 16—, a dochter, and that that dochter is Jessie Warriston."

Geordie waited for an answer, fixing his eyes on Lady Maitland.

Louise immediately began to make indications of a spirit of opposition; and Lady Maitland herself, gathering up any traces of dignity, which the presence of Geordie generally dispersed, replied—

"Thou hast no proof, sir, of the extraordinary charge, thou hast now, for the first time, brought against me; and I cannot convict myself of a crime."

Louise blustered and supported her lady.

"Vat, in the name of God, is de meaning of dis fellow's demand? *Parbleu!* He is mad—*de fou*—bad—vicked—mechant. Vere I your ladyship, I would trust him out, and give him de grand kick, and tomble him down de marche de stairs. Vy, sir, could you have de grand impudence to tell my lady she be de bad woman."

Geordie heard all this with calmness and silence.

"It's o' sma importance to me," he resumed, "whether yer leddyship comply wi' my request or no; for, indeed, though politeness made me ca' it a favour conferred upon me, the favour is a' the ither way. Let yer leddyship be silent, an' I'll prove that yer leddyship bore the bairn; but

ye maun ken that Geordie Willison has nae power ower the law—when the seals are broken, the judgment will come ; and I canna prove the birth o' the bairn without, at the same time, and by the same prufe, proving that ye attempted to strangle it, and left it for dead in the hedges o' Warriston. Here is yer leddyship's necklace, whilk I took fra the craig o' the struggling cratur, and here are the claes it had on, marked wi' draps o' blude that cam frae its little mouth. I show thae things no as proofs on whilk I mean a'thegither to rest, but only to testify to ye what ye sae weel ken, that what I say is true. Speak, noo, my leddies—your lives are i' the hands o' the idiot cratur Geordie Willison. If ye gang to the court, ye are saved—if ye winna, ye are lost. Will ye gang, or will ye hang?"

The women were both terrified by the statement of Geordie. Reluctant to make any such admission, they struggled with the various emotions of indignation, pride, and fear, which took, by turns, possession of their bosoms. Lady Maitland fainted, and Louise was totally unable to render her assistance; for she lay in a hysterical state of excitement on the floor. Geordie locked the door, and kept his eyes fixed on the females. He yielded them no aid; but stood like a destroying angel, witnessing the effects of his desolation. Lady Maitland at last opened her eyes, and having collected her senses, resolved to comply with Geordie's request. She said to him, that, provided nothing was asked beyond the questions, whether she bore the child on the day mentioned, and whether Jessie Maitland, whom she had secretly seen, was that child—she would answer them in the affirmative. This satisfied Geordie, and he departed.

On the day of the service of Ludovic Brodie, a brief was taken out in name of Jessie Warriston or Maitland, as heir female of taillie to the estate and title of Maitland of Castle

Gower. Brodie and his agents had no notice of the brief until they came into court.

The briefs being read, Brodie's propinquity was proved, and no person had any idea that the existence of a nearer heir could be established. But the door of the court opened, and Lady Maitland and Louise Grecourt stood before the inquest. They swore to the birth of the child on the day mentioned, and that Jessie Maitland, who was presented to them in court by Geordie Willison himself, was that child.

An objection was taken by Brodie's agents, that the child was illegitimate, because it was born ten months, minus two days, after Sir Marmaduke went to the continent; but the judge overruled the objection, stating that it was the law of Scotland, that every child born within ten months of the husband's departure, is a legal child.

Jessie Warriston was, therefore, served heir, according to the terms of her brief. She went in her own carriage, in which sat Geordie Willison, to take possession of her estates and titles. She was now Lady Jessie Maitland of Castle Gower, and was soon afterwards united to William Forbes, her old lover.

THE SNOW STORM OF 1825.

Our readers will recollect the dreadful snow storm that occurred in the year 1825. Indeed, it is impossible that any one, who was above the years of childhood at the time, can have forgot it, or can ever forget it. It was the most tremendous with which this country has been visited for a century. For nearly six weeks, and in some places for a much longer period, every road, excepting those in the immediate vicinity of large towns, was blocked up, and rendered impassable, by either horse or foot; and one consequence was, that scores of travellers, of all descriptions, were suddenly arrested in their several places of temporary sojournment on the road, and held in durance during the whole period of the storm, without the possibility of communicating with their friends, or, in the case of mercantile travellers, with their employers.

It was a weary time, on the whole, to those who were thus laid under embargo; but not without its pleasures either; for each house thus situated, having perhaps a dozen strangers in it, from and going to all parts of the kingdom, became a distinct and independent little community, from which its local exclusion from the busy world had shut out, also, for the time at any rate, much of its cares and troubles—a philosophic spirit soon prevailing, after the first day or two's confinement, to make the most of what could not be helped.

The writer of this sheet happened to be one of nine who were shut up in the way alluded to, in an inn in the south of Scotland; and although, as already said, it was rather a weary thing on the whole, yet was it not without its en-

joyments. Our *ennui* was often delightfully relieved by the diversity of character as developed in our little community; for we had, if we may so speak, the salt, the pepper, and the vinegar of human dispositions, sprinkled throughout the party, which not only took from the cold insipidity of our confinement, but gave to it a rich and pleasant relish. Our host's cellar and larder happened to be well stored, while the house was, in all other respects, an excellent one; so, what with the produce of the former, and the roaring fires kept up by Jamie, the waiter, we had really nothing to complain of on the score of creature comforts—and it is amazing how far the possession of these will go to reconcile men to otherwise very unpleasant situations. In this case, they were enhanced by the dreary prospect from without—the howling storm, the drifting snow, and the wide, dismal, monotonous waste of dazzling white that lay all around us.

The consciousness of the comforts we enjoyed, in short, put us all in good humour with one another; while a fellowship in misfortune, and a community of feeling, as well as of persons, introduced a degree of friendliness and intimacy, to which few other circumstances, perhaps, would have given rise. We had our small round of standard jokes, peculiar to our situation, which few else could have understood, and fewer still have appreciated, though they did understand them. We had, too, a small round of harmless tricks, which we regularly played off every day on some one or other of the corps. But, notwithstanding all this—the larder, the cellar, the fire, the jokes, and the tricks—time did occasionally hang rather heavily upon our hands, especially in the evenings. To lessen this weight, we latterly fell upon the contrivance of telling stories, one or two of us each night, by turns. The idea is a borrowed one, as the reader will at once perceive, but we humbly think not a pin the worse on that account. There was no limitation, of course, as to the subject. Each was allowed to

tell what story he liked; but it was the general understanding that these stories should be personal, if possible—that is, that each should relate the most remarkable circumstances in his own life. Those who had nothing of the kind to communicate, were, of course, allowed to get off with anything else they chose to substitute. The first to whose lot it fell to entertain us in this way, was a fat, good-humoured, good-natured, little, hunch-backed gentleman, with a short leg, and a bright yellow waistcoat. He was a mercantile traveller, and, if I recollect right, a native of Newcastle.

When the little man was asked to open his budget, "Why, gentlemen," said he, "I do not see that I can do better than comply with the understood wish of the company, by giving you a sketch of my own life, which you will find to present, I think, as curious a race, or struggle, or whatever else you may choose to call it, between luck and misfortune, as perhaps you have heard of:—

You must know, then, my friends (went on the little gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat), that the indications of my future good fortune began to exhibit themselves as early as they well could. I was born with a caul upon my head, gentlemen, which all of you know is an indubitable token that the little personage to whom it belongs will be singularly fortunate in life. Well, gentleman, I was favoured, as I have already said, with one of those desirable headpieces; and great was the joy the circumstance gave rise to amongst the female friends and gossips who were assembled on the occasion. The midwife said that everything I should put my hand to would prosper, and that I would be, to a certainty, at the very least, a general, a bishop, or a judge; the nurse to whom I was subsequently consigned, on the same ground, dubbed me a duke, and would never call me by any other title; whilst my poor mother saw me, in perspective, sitting amongst the great ones of the earth,

surrounded with power, wealth, and glory. Such were the bright visions of my future prosperity, to which my caul gave rise; and probably they might have been realized, had it not been for an unlucky counteracting or thwarting power that always stepped in, seemingly for no other purpose but to disappoint my own hopes and those of my friends; sometimes baulking my expectations altogether, when on the point of fruition—sometimes converting that to evil in me which would assuredly have produced good to any other person. But to proceed with my history. I grew up a fine, stout, well-made child. Ay, you may laugh, gentlemen (said the little man, good-humouredly, seeing a titter go round at this personal allusion, which so ill accorded with his present deformed appearance), but it was the case, I assure you, until I met with the accidents that altered my shape to what you now see it. Well, I repeat, that I grew a fine promising child, and, to the inexpressible amazement and delight of my parents, showed symptoms of taking unusually early to my legs.

Nor were these symptoms unfaithful. I took to my pins, on my own account, before I was ten months old; but, unfortunately, my first walk was into a draw-well, where I would infallibly have been drowned, if it had not been for a large Newfoundland dog which my father kept, and which was close by me at the time of the accident. The faithful creature leapt in after me, and kept me afloat, until my father came and extricated me. After this, I was never trusted a moment out of sight; and thus, instead of this precocious developement of my physical powers proving a blessing to me, it proved a curse; for it deprived me of all liberty. As I grew up, however, this restraint became less rigorous, and I was permitted to ramble in the garden: and one of my first feats, after obtaining this freedom, was, to climb a high wall, to come at an uncommonly fine apple that had long tempted me with its rosy cheeks, and I had

just succeeded in getting near enough to the prize to grasp it, when, in making this effort, down I came; and this leg, gentlemen (said the little man, holding out his deformed limb), was the consequence. I fell and broke my leg, just as I was about to grasp the apple. Fatal type of all my subsequent misfortunes!

I have now, gentlemen (went on the little man), to account for the other deformity that disfigures me, viz.,—my hump-back. This befell me in the following manner. Playing one day with a number of boys, of about my own age, which was then six or seven, a big fellow, of double the size of any of us, came in amongst us, and began to plunder us of our playthings; and he was in the very act of robbing me of a hoop, when another lad, still stronger and bigger, who saw the attempted robbery, generously ran to my assistance, and aimed a tremendous blow with a stick at my assailant. The blow, however, missed him at whom it was aimed, and took me exactly on the small of the back, which it broke in two as if it had been a pipe shank; and the consequence was, as you see, gentlemen (said the little man in the bright yellow waistcoat, edging round, at the same time, to indicate his hump).

Well, then, gentlemen (he went on), up to my ninth year, this was all the good fortune that my caul brought me—that is, being first half-drowned, then breaking my leg, and lastly my back. To compensate, however, in some measure, for these mischances, I turned out an excellent scholar; and, especially, became a very expert Latinist—a circumstance which my father, who had a great veneration for the language, thought sufficient alone to make my fortune; and it certainly procured me—that is, very nearly procured me—in the meantime, some of the chief honours of the school. I say very nearly—for I did not actually obtain them; but it was only by the merest accident in the world that I did not. The misapprehension of a

single word deprived me of a prize which was about to be awarded to me, and gave it to one of my competitors. This was reckoned a very hard case; but there was no help for it.

Still there was luck in the caul, gentlemen (continued the little man in the bright yellow waistcoat), as you shall hear. Going home from school one day, a distance of about a mile and a half, I found a very handsome gold watch, with valuable appendages, lying upon the road. I was at first afraid to left the glittering treasure, hardly believing it possible that so rich and splendid a thing could be without an owner; but, gradually picking up courage, I seized on the watch, hurried it into my pocket, and ran onwards like a madman. I had not run far, however, when a man, respectably dressed, but who seemed the worse of liquor, or rather like one just recovering from a debauch, met me, and, seizing me by the breast, fiercely asked me if I had seen anything of a gold watch. I instantly confessed that I had found such a thing; and, trembling with apprehension, for the fellow continued to look furiously at me, produced the watch.

"Very well," said he, taking it from me. "Now, you little villian you, confess. You did not find the watch, but stole it from me whilst I slept on the road-side."

I protested that it was not so—that I had found it as I had said. To this protest the fellow replied by striking me a violent blow on the side of the head, which stretched me on the road; where, after administering two or three parting kicks, to teach me honesty, as he said, he left me in a state of insensibility. I was shortly afterwards picked up and carried home; but so severe had been the drubbing I got, that I was obliged to keep my bed for three weeks after. And this was all I gained by finding a gold watch. Had any other person found it, they would have been allowed to keep it, or, at the worst, have got a handsome

reward for giving it up; but such things were to be not in any case in which I should be concerned.

Still I say, gentlemen (continued the little man in the bright yellow waistcoat), there *was* luck in the caul; for, soon after, a distant relation of my mother's, who had been long in the West Indies, and had there realized a large fortune, having come to England on some business, paid us a visit, and was so well pleased with the attention shown him, and with the society he got introduced to, that he spent the whole subsequent period of his temporary residence in this country with us. During this time, he became remarkably fond of me—so fond that he could never be without me. I was obliged to accompany him in all his walks, and even to sleep with him. In short, he became so attached to me, that it was evident to every one that some good would come out of it; for he was immensely rich, and had no family of his own, never having been married. Indeed, that I would be the better for the old boy's love was not matter of conjecture, for he frequently hinted it very broadly. He would often take me on his knee, and, while fondling me, would say, in presence of my father and mother—"Well, my little fellow, who knows but you may ride in your carriage yet? As odd things have happened." Then, "Would you like to be a rich man, Bobby?" he would inquire, looking archly at me. "If you continue as good a boy as you are just now, I'll undertake to promise that you will." In short, before leaving us, our wealthy friend, whose name was Jeremiah Hairsplitter, held out certain hopes to my parents of my being handsomely provided for in his will. This so affected us all, that we wept bitterly when the good old man left us to return to the West Indies; where, however, he told us, he now intended remaining only a short time, having made up his mind to come home and spend the remainder of his days with us.

Well, gentlemen (said the iittle hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat), here was a very agreeable prospect, you'll all allow; and it was one in which there appeared so much certainty, that it cost my father—who had been led to believe he should get a handsome slice too—many serious thoughts as to how we should dispose of the money—how lay it out to the best advantage. My father, who was a very pious man, determined, for one thing, to build a church; and, as to me and my fortune, he thought the best thing I could do, seeing, from my deformities, that I was not very well adapted for undergoing the fatigues of a professional life, was, when I should become a little older, to turn country gentleman; and with this idea he was himself so well pleased, that he began, thinking it best to take time by the forelock, to look around for a suitable seat for me when I should come of age and be ready to act on my own account; and he fortunately succeeded in finding one that seemed a very eligible investment. It was a very handsome country house, about the distance of three miles from where we lived, and to which there was attached an estate of 1000 acres of land, all in a high state of cultivation. The upset price of the whole—for the property was at that moment on sale—was £20,000; a dead bargain, as the lawyer who had the management of the property assured us. It was worth at least double the money, he said; and in this Mr. Longshanks, the land-measurer, whom my father also consulted on the subject, perfectly agreed; but was good enough to give my father a quiet hint to hold off a bit, and, as the proprietor was in great distress for money, he might probably get the estate for £18,000, or something, at any rate, considerably below the price named. Grateful for this hint, my father invited Mr. Longshanks to dine with him, and gave him a bottle of his best wine. Now, gentlemen, please to observe (said the little hunch-backed gentleman in the bright yellow waist-

coat) that while we were thus treating about an estate worth £20,000, we had not a sixpence wherewith to buy it; so that Mr. Longshanks' hint about holding off was rather a superfluous one. But then our prospects were good—nay, certain; there was, therefore, no harm—nay, it was proper and prudent to anticipate matters a little in the way we did; so that we might at once have the advantage of sufficient time to do things deliberately, and be prepared to make a good use of our fortune the moment we got possession of it.

That our prospects were excellent, I think you will all allow, gentlemen, when you take into account what I have already told regarding our worthy relative; but that they really were so, you will still more readily admit, when I tell you that we received many letters from Mr. Hairsplitter, after his arrival in Jamaica (for he now opened a regular correspondence with us), in all of which he continued not only to keep our hopes alive, as to the destination of his wealth, but to increase them; so that I—for the bulk of his fortune, there was no doubt, was intended for me—was already looked upon as a singularly lucky young dog; and of this opinion, in the most unqualified sense, and in a most especial manner, was my mother, my nurse, and the lady who ushered me into the world—all of whom exultingly referred to my caul, and to their own oft-expressed sentiments regarding the luck that was to befall me.

But, to return to my story. After a lapse of about two or three years, during which, as I have said, we received many letters from our worthy relative, one came, in which he informed us that it was the last we should have from him from Jamaica, as he had wound up all his affairs, and was about to leave the island, to return home and spend the remainder of his days with us, or in our immediate neighbourhood.

Well, gentlemen, you see matters were gradually ap-

proaching to a very delightful crisis; and we, as you may believe, saw it with no small satisfaction. We indulged in the most delicious dreams; indeed, our whole life was now one continued reverie of the most soothing and balmy kind. From this dreamy state, however, we were very soon awakened by the following paragraph in a newspaper, which my father accidentally stumbled on, one morning as we were at breakfast. It was headed "Dreadful Shipwreck," and went on thus:—"It is with feelings of the most sincere regret we inform our readers, that the Isabella, from Jamaica to London, has foundered at sea, and every one on board perished, together with the whole of a most valuable cargo. Amongst the unfortunate passengers in this ill-fated vessel was a Mr. Jeremiah Hairsplitter, a well-known Jamaica planter, who was on his return, for good and all, to his native land. The whole of this gentleman's wealth, which was enormous, will now go, it is said (he having died intestate), to a poor man in this neighbourhood [Liverpool], who is nearest of kin."

Well, gentlemen (continued the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat), here was a pretty finish to all our bright anticipations! For some time, indeed, we entertained hopes that the reports, especially the last, might be false; but, alas! they turned out too true. True, true were they, to the letter. My father, unwilling to believe that all was lost, called upon a lawyer in the town where we resided, who had a good deal to do with our late relative's affairs; and, after mentioning to him the footing we were on with the deceased, and the expectations he had led us to indulge in, inquired if *nothing* would arise to us from Mr. Hairsplitter's effects.

"Not a rap!" was the laconic and dignified reply—"not a cross, not a cowrie! You haven't a shadow of claim to anything. All that Mr. Hairsplitter may have said goes for nothing, as it is not down in black and white, in legal phrase."

So, my friends (said the narrator, with a sigh) here was an end to this fortune and to my luck, at that bout, at any rate. Still, gentlemen (went on the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat), I maintain there was luck in the caul.

I was now, you must know, my friends, getting up in years—that is to say, I was now somewhere about one-and-twenty. Well, my father, thinking it full time that I should be put in a way of doing something for myself, applied, in my behalf, to a certain nobleman who resided in our neighbourhood, and who was under obligations to my father for some election services. When my father called on the peer alluded to, and informed him of his object—"Why, sir," said his lordship, "this is rather a fortunate circumstance for both of us. I am just now in want of precisely such a young man as you describe your son to be, to act as my secretary and amanuensis, and will therefore be very glad to employ him." His lordship then mentioned his terms. They were liberal, and, of course, instantly accepted. This settled, my father was desired to send me to Cram Hall, his lordship's residence, next day, to enter on my new duties.

Here, then, you see, was luck at last, gentlemen (said the little hump-backed gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat); for the nobleman was powerful, and there was no saying what he might do for me. Next day, accordingly, I repaired to Cram Hall with a beating, but exulting heart; for I was at once proud of my employment, and terrified for my employer, who was, I knew, a dignified, pompous, vain, conceited personage.

"Show off your Latin to him, Dick, my boy," said my father, before I set out: "it will give him a good opinion of your talents and erudition." I promised that I would.

Well, on being introduced to his lordship, he received me with the most affable condescension; but there was

something about his affability, I thought, which made it look extremely like as if it had been assumed for the purpose of showing how a great man could descend.

"Glad to see you, young man," he said. "I hope you and I shall get on well together. But there was just one single question regarding you, which I quite forgot to put to your father. Do you understand Latin thoroughly?—that is, can you translate it readily?"

Feeling my own strength on this point, and delighted that he had afforded me so early an opportunity of declaring it, I replied, with a degree of exultation which I had some difficulty in repressing—"I flatter myself, my lord, that you will not find me deficient in that particular. I understand Latin very well, and will readily undertake to translate anything in that language which may be presented to me."

"In that case," replied his lordship, gravely, "I am sorry to say, young man, you will not suit me."

"How, my lord!" said I, with a look of mingled amazement and disappointment—"because I understand Latin? I should have thought that a recommendation to your lordship's service."

"Quite otherwise, sir," replied his lordship, coolly. "It may appear to you, indeed, sir, rather an odd ground of disqualification. But the thing is easily explained. I have often occasion, sir," he went on, with increasing dignity, "to write on matters of importance to my friends in the cabinet; and, when I have anything of a very particular nature to say, I always write my sentiments in Latin. It would therefore, sir, be imprudent of me to employ any one in transcribing such letters, who is conversant with the language alluded to; or, indeed, otherwise exposing them to the eye of such a person. You will, therefore, young man," continued the peer—now rising from his seat, as if with a desire that I should take the movement as a

hint that he wished the interview to terminate—"present my respects to your father, and say that I am very sorry for this affair—very sorry, indeed."

Saying this, he edged me towards the door; and, long before I reached it, bowed me a good morning, which there was no evading. I acknowledged it the best way I could, left the house, and returned home—I leave you, gentlemen, to conceive with what feelings. My Latin, you see, of which I was so vain, and which, with anybody else, would have been a help to success in the world in many situations, and in none could have been against it, was the very reverse to me.

That there was luck in the caul, gentlemen, nevertheless, I still maintain (said the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat, laughing); and you will acknowledge it when I tell you that, soon after the occurrence just related, I bought a ticket in the lottery, which turned out a prize of £20,000."

"Ha, ha! at last!" here shouted out, with one voice, all the little man's auditors. "So you caught it at last!"

"Not so fast, gentlemen, if you please—not so fast," said the little man, gravely. The facts certainly were as I have stated. I did buy a ticket in the lottery. I recollect the number well, and will as long as I live. I chose it for its oddity. It was 9999, and it did turn out a £20,000 prize. But there is a trifling particular or two regarding it which I have yet to explain. A gentleman, an acquaintance of mine, to whom I had expressed some regret at having ventured so much money on a lottery ticket, offered not only to relieve me of it, but to give me a premium of five pounds, subject to a deduction of the price of a bowl of punch. "A bird in hand's worth two in the bush," thought I, and at once closed with his offer. Nay, so well pleased was I with my bargain, that I insisted on giving an additional bowl, and actually did so.

Next day, my ticket was drawn a twenty thousand pound prize! and I had the happiness (added the little man, with a rueful expression of countenance) of communicating to my friend his good luck, as the letter of advice on the subject came, in the first instance, to me.

However, gentlemen, luck there was in the caul still, say I (continued the little hump-backed gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat). Love, gentlemen—sweet, dear, delightful love!—(here the little man looked extremely sentimental)—came to soothe my woes and banish my regrets. Yes, my friends he said (observing a slight smile of surprise and incredulity on the countenance of his auditors, proceeding, we need hardly say, from certain impressions regarding his personal appearance), I say that love—dear, delightful love—came now to my aid, to reconcile me to my misfortunes, and to restore my equanimity. The objects of my affections—for there were two——

"Oh, unconscionable man!" we here all exclaimed in one breath. "Two! Ah! too bad that."

"Yes, I repeat, two," said the little man composedly—"the objects of my passion were two." The one was a beautiful girl of three-and-twenty—the other, a beautiful little fortune of £10,000, of which she was in full and uncontrolled possession. Well, gentlemen, to make a long story short, we loved each other most devotedly; for she was a girl of singular judgment and penetration, and placed little store by mere personal appearance in those she loved: the mind, gentlemen—the mind was what this amiable girl looked to. Well, as I was saying, we loved each other with the fondest affection, and at length I succeeded in prevailing upon her to name the happy day when we should become one. Need I describe to you, gentleman, what were my transports—what the intoxicating feelings of delight with which my whole soul was absorbed by the contemplation of the delicious prospect that lay before me!

A beautiful woman and a fortune of £10,000 within my grasp! No. I'm sure I need not describe the sensations I allude to, gentlemen—you will at once conceive and appreciate them.

Well, my friends, all went smoothly on with me this time. The happy day arrived—we proceeded to church. The clergyman began the service. In three minutes more, gentleman, I would have been indissolubly united to my beloved and her £10,000, when, at this critical moment, a person rushed breathless into the church, forced his way through the crowd of friends by whom we were surrounded, and caught my betrothed in his arms, exclaiming—"Jessie, Jessie! would you forsake me? Have you forgot your vows?" Jessie replied by a loud shriek, and immediately fainted.

Here, then, you see, gentlemen (continued the little hump-backed man in the bright yellow waistcoat), was a pretty kick-up all in a moment.

In a twinkling, the bevy of friends by whom we were accompanied scattered in all directions—some running for water, some for brandy, some for one thing and some for another, till there was scarcely one left in the church. The service was, of course, instantly stopped; and my beloved was, in the meantime, very tenderly supported by the arms of the stranger; for such he was to me at any rate, although by no means so either to the lady herself or to her friends. I was, as you may well believe, all astonishment and amazement at this extraordinary scene, and could not at all conceive what it meant; but it was not long before I was very fully informed on this head. To return, however, in the meantime, to the lady. On recovering from her fainting fit, the stranger, who had been all along contemplating her with a look of the most tender affection, asked her, in a gentle voice, "If she would still continue true to him." And, gentlemen, she answered, though in a voice scarcely

audible, "Yes;" and, immediately after, the two walked out of the church arm in arm, in spite of the remonstrances and even threats of myself and my friends—leaving us, and me in particular, to such reflections on the uncertainty of all human events as the circumstance which had just occurred was calculated to excite. In three weeks after, the stranger and Jessie were married. Who he was is soon explained. He had been a favoured lover of Jessie's some seven years before, and had gone abroad, where it was believed he had died, there having been no word from him during the greater part of that period. How this was explained I never knew; but that he was not dead, you will allow was now pretty clearly established.

Now, gentlemen (added our little friend), I have brought my mishaps up to the present date. What may be still in store for me, I know not; but I have now brought myself to the peaceful and most comfortable condition of having no hopes of succeeding in anything, and therefore am freed, at least, from all liability to the pains of disappointment." And here ended the story of the little hump-backed gentleman in the bright yellow waistcoat.

We all felt for his disappointments, and wished him better luck.

The person to whose turn it came next to entertain us, was a quiet, demure looking personage, of grave demeanour, but of mild and pleasant countenance. His gravity, we thought, partook a little of melancholy; and he was, in consequence, recognised generally in the house by the title of the melancholy gentleman. He was, however, very far from being morose; indeed, on the contrary, he was exceedingly kind and gentle in his manner, and would not, I am convinced, have harmed the meanest insect that crawls, let alone his own species.

"Well, gentlemen," said this person, on being informed that it was his turn to divert us with some story or other,

"I will do the best I can to entertain you, and will follow the example of my unfortunate predecessor of the evening, by choosing a subject of something of a personal nature."

"To begin, then, my friends," went on the melancholy gentleman—"I do not, I think, arrogate too much when I say that I am as peaceable and peace-loving a man as ever existed. I have always abhorred strife and wrangling; and never knowingly or willingly interfere in any way with the affairs of my neighbours or of others. I would, in short, at any time, rather sacrifice my interests than quarrel with any one; while I reckon it the greatest happiness to be let alone, and to be allowed to get through the world quietly and noiselessly. From my very infancy, my friends (said the melancholy gentleman), I loved quiet above all things; and there is a tradition in our family, strikingly corroborative of this. The tradition alluded to bears that I never cried while an infant, and that I never could endure my rattle. Well, gentlemen, such were and such still are my dispositions. But, offending no one, and interfering with no one, how have I been treated in my turn? You shall hear.

At school, I was thrashed by the master for not interfering to prevent my companions fighting; and I was thrashed by my companions for not taking part in their quarrels: so that, between them, I had, I assure you, a very miserable life of it. However, these were but small matters, compared to what befell me after I had fairly embarked in the world.

My first experience after this, of how little my peaceful and inoffensive disposition would avail me, was with an evening club which I joined. For some time I got on very well with the persons who composed this association, and seemed—at least I thought so—to be rather a favourite with them, on account of my quiet and peaceable demeanour; and, under ordinary circumstances, perhaps I might

have continued so. But the demon of discord got amongst them, and I became, in consequence of my non-resisting qualities, the scapegoat of their spleen; or rather, I became the safety-valve by which their passions found a harmless egress. But, to drop metaphor, my friends (said the melancholy gentleman), the club got to loggerheads on a certain political question—I forget now what it was—and for some nights there was a great deal of angry discussion and violent altercation on the subject. In these debates, however, in accordance with my natural disposition, I took no part whatever, except by making some fruitless attempts to abate the resentment of the parties, by thrusting in a jocular remark or so, when anything particularly severe was said. Well, gentlemen, how was I rewarded for this charitable conduct, think you? Why, I'll tell you.

On the third or fourth night, I think it was, of the discussion alluded to, a member got up and said, addressing the club—"My friends, a good deal of vituperation and opprobrious language has been used in this here room, regarding the question we have been discussing these three or four nights back; but we have all spoke our minds freely, and stood to it like men who isn't afeard to speak their sentiments anywhere. Now, I says that's what I likes. I likes a man to stand to his tackle. But I hates, as I do the devil, your snakes in the grass, your smooth-chopped fellows, who hears all and never says nothing, so as how you can't tell whether he is fish or flesh. I say, I hate such dastardly, sneaking fellows, who won't speak out; and I says that such are unfit for this company;" (here the speaker looked hard at me); "and I move that he be turned out directly, neck and heel."

Well, this speech, my friends (went on the melancholy gentleman), which you will perceive was levelled at me, was received with a shout of applause by both parties. The ruffing and cheering was immense; and most laudably

prompt was the execution of the proposal that excited it. Before I had time to evacuate the premises quietly and of my own accord, which I was about to do, I was seized by the breast by a tall ferocious-looking fellow, who sat next me, and who was immediately aided by three or four others, and dragged over every obstacle that stood in the way to the door, out of which I was finally kicked with particular emphasis.

Such, then, my friends (said the melancholy gentleman), was the first most remarkable instance of the benefits I was likely to derive from my inoffensive non-meddling disposition. However, it was my nature; and neither this unmerited treatment, nor any other usage which I afterwards experienced, could alter it.

Some time after this, I connected myself with a certain congregation in our town, and it unfortunately happened that, soon after I joined them, they came all to sixes and sevens about a minister. One party was for a Mr. Triterite, the other a Mr. White. These were distinguished, as usual, in such and similar cases, by the adjunct *ite*, which had, as you may perceive, a most unhappy effect in the case of the name of the first gentleman, whose followers were called Triteriteites, and those of the other Whiteites. However, this was but a small matter. To proceed. In the squabbles alluded to, gentlemen, I took no part; it being a matter of perfect indifference to me which of the candidates had the appointment. All that I desired was, that I might be let alone, and not be called upon to interfere in any way in the dispute. But would they allow me this indulgence, think you? No, not they. They resolved, seemingly, that my unobtrusive conduct should be no protection to me. Two or three days after the commencement of the contest, I was waited upon by a deputation from a committee of the Triteriteites, and requested to join them in opposing the Whiteites. This I civilly declined; telling

them, at the same time, that it was my intention and my earnest wish to avoid all interference in the pending controversy; that I was perfectly indifferent to which of the candidates the church was given, and would be very glad to become a hearer of either of them; that, in short, I wished to make myself no enemies on account of any such contest.

"Oh, very well, Mr. B——," said the spokesman, reddening with anger, "we understand all this perfectly, and think very little, I assure you, of such mean evasive conduct. Had you said boldly and at once that you favoured the other party, we would at least have given you credit for honesty. But you may depend upon it, sir," he added, "White never will get the church. That you may rely upon."

"Scurvy conduct," muttered another of the committee, as he was retiring after the speaker.

"Shabby, sniveling, *drivelling* conduct," muttered a third.

"Low, mean, *sneaking* conduct," said a fourth.

"Dirty subterfuge," exclaimed a fifth. And off the gentlemen went.

But they had not yet done with me. One of the number was a person with whom I had some acquaintance, and the next day I received from him the following note:—"Sir, your unmanly (I will not mince the matter with you), your unmanly and disengenuous conduct yesterday, when called upon by Mr. Triterite's committee, has so disgusted me that I beg you to understand that we are friends no longer. A candid and open avowal of opposite sentiments from those which I entertain, I trust, I shall be always liberal enough to tolerate in any one, without prejudice to previous intimacy; but I cannot remain on terms of friendship with a man who has the meanness to seek to conciliate the party he opposes, by concealing his adherence to that which he has espoused.—I am, sir," &c.

Well, my friends (said the melancholy gentleman), was not this an extremely hard case? To be thus abused, and reviled, and scouted, for merely desiring to be allowed to live in peace, and to have nothing to do with a squabble in which I did not feel in any way interested. But this was not all. I was lampooned, caricatured, and paragraphed in the newspapers, in a thousand different ways. In the first, I was satirized as the *fair* dealer; in the second, I was represented as a wolf in sheep's clothing; and in the last, I was hinted at as "a certain quiet double-faced gentleman, not a hundred miles from hence."

But still this was not all. Two or three days after I had been waited on by the Triteriteites, the same honour was done me by the Whiteites, and with similar views. To the gentlemen of this party, I said precisely what I had said to those of the opposite faction, and begged of them, in heaven's name, to let me alone, and settle the matter amongst them as they best could.

"Well," replied one of the gentlemen, when I had done, "I must say, I did not expect this of you, Mr. B. I thought I could have reckoned on your support; but it doesn't signify. We can secure Mr. White's appointment without you. But I must say, if you had been the candid man I took you for, you would have told me, ere this, that you meant to have supported the other party. I really cannot think very highly, Mr. B., of your conduct in this matter; but it doesn't signify, sir—it doesn't signify. We now know who are our friends and who are not. Mr. Triterite, you may depend upon it, will never get the church, even though he has you to support him." Saying this, he turned on his heel and left me, followed by his train, who, precisely as the others had done, muttered as they went, "shabby fellow," "mean scamp," "shuffling conduct," "snake in the grass" (favourite phrase this), &c. &c.

Well, my friends, here you see (said the melancholy

gentleman), without giving any one the smallest offence, and desiring nothing so much as peace and the good will of my neighbours—here was I, I say, become obnoxious to heaven knows how many people; for my reputation naturally extended from the committees to the other members of the congregation, and from them again to their friends and acquaintances; so that I had, in the end, a pretty formidable array of enemies. The consequence of this affair was, that I soon found myself compelled, from the petty persecutions and annoyances of all sorts, to which I was subsequently exposed, to leave the congregation altogether. However, to compensate for all these troubles and vexations, I had the good fortune, about this time, to become acquainted with a very amiable young lady, as peaceably inclined and as great a lover of quiet as myself. This lady I married, having previously secured a house in one of the quietest and most retired places in the town, so as to be out of the way of all noise and din. Immediately beneath this house, however, there was an empty unlet shop, which I could not help regarding with a suspicious eye, from an apprehension that it might be taken by a person of some noisy calling or other; and so much at last did this fear alarm me, that I determined on taking the shop into my own hands, and running myself the risk of its letting—thus securing the choice of a tenant. Having come to this resolution, then, I called upon the landlord and inquired the rent.

"O sir," said he, "the shop is let."

"Let, sir!" replied I; "I saw a ticket on it yesterday."

"That might well be, sir, for it was only let this morning."

"And to whom, sir, is it let, may I ask? I mean, sir, what is his business?"

"A tinsmith, sir," said the landlord, coolly.

"A tinsmith!" replied I, turning pale. "Then my worst fears are realized!"

The landlord looked surprised, and inquired what I meant. I told him, and had a laugh from him for my pains.

Yes, my friends (said the melancholy gentleman), a tinsmith had taken the shop—a working tinsmith—and a most industrious and hard-working one he was, to my cost. But this was not the worst of it. The tinsmith was not a week in his new shop, when he received a large West India order; and when I mention that this piece of good fortune, as I have no doubt he reckoned it, compelled him to engage about a score of additional hands, I may safely leave it to yourselves, gentlemen, to conceive what sort of a neighbourhood I soon found myself in. On this subject, then, I need only say, that, in less than a week thereafter, I was fairly hammered out of the house, and compelled to look out for other quarters. But this, after all, was merely a personal matter—one which did not involve the inimical feelings of others towards me; and, therefore, though an inconvenience at the time, it did not disturb my quiet beyond the moment of suffering, as those unhappy occurrences did in which I had, however unwittingly, provoked the enmity of others; and, therefore, after I had been fairly settled in my new house, I thought very little more about the matter, and was beginning to enjoy the calm, quiet life which I so much loved, as nobody had meddled with me for upwards of three weeks. But, alas! this felicity was to be but of short duration. The election of a member of Parliament came on, and I had a vote—but I had determined to make no use of it; for, being but little of a politician, and, above all things, desiring to be on good terms with everybody, whatever might be their religious or political persuasions, I thought the best way for me was to take no share whatever in the impending contest; it being a mere matter of moonshine to me whether Whig or Tory

was uppermost. In adopting this neutral course, I expected, and I think not unreasonably, to get quietly through with the matter, and that I should avoid giving offence to any one. I will further confess, that, besides this feeling, I was guided to a certain extent by interest. I had many customers of opposite political tenets—Whig, Tory, and Radical—and I was desirous of retaining the custom and good will of them all, by taking part with none. Grievous error—dreadful mistake!

Soon after, the candidates started, and there happened to be one of each of the three classes just mentioned—that is, Whig, Tory, and Radical. I received a card from one of my best customers, a Whig, containing a larger order than usual for tea, wine, spirits, &c.—such being the articles in which I deal, gentlemen (said our melancholy friend); but, at the bottom of the slip, there was the following note:—"Mr. S—— hopes he may count on Mr. B.'s supporting the Liberal interest in the ensuing election, by giving his vote to Lord Botherem. Mr. S—— is perfectly aware of Mr. B.'s indifference to political matters; but it is on this very account that Mr. S—— reckons on his support, as it can be a matter of no moment to him to whom he gives his vote."

Well, gentleman, here you see was the first attack upon me; and the second soon followed. I saw the storm that was gathering. In the course of the very same day, I was waited on by another customer, an inveterate Tory.

"Well, Mr. B.," he said, on entering my shop, "I am come to solicit a very important favour from you; but still one which I am sure you will not refuse an old friend and a tolerably good customer. In short, Mr. B.," he went on, "knowing it is a matter of moonshine to you who is member for this burgh—for I've heard you say so—I have come to ask your vote for Mr. Blatheringham, the Tory candidate."

"My dear sir," I replied, "you are quite right in saying that it is a matter of moonshine to me what may be the political tenets of our member; but I have resolved—and I have done so for that very reason—not to interfere in the matter at all. I do not mean to vote on any side." And I laughed; but my friend looked grave.

"Oh! you don't, Mr. B.!" he said. "Then am I to understand that you won't oblige me in this matter, although it is on a point which is of no consequence to you, on your own confession, and, therefore, requiring no sacrifice of political principle."

"My dear sir," replied I, in the mildest and most conciliating manner possible, anxious to turn away wrath—"I have already said"——

"Oh! I know very well, sir, what you have said, and I'll recollect it, too, you may depend upon it, and not much to your profit. My account's closed with you, sir. Good morning!" And out of the shop he went in a furious passion. On the day following this, I received a note from the Whig canvasser, in reply to one from me on the subject of *his* solicitation, in which I had expressed nearly the same sentiments which I delivered verbally to my Tory friend: and in this note I was served with almost precisely the same terms which the Tory had used in return, only he carried the matter a little farther—telling me plainly that he would not only withdraw his own custom from me, but do his endeavour to deprive me of the custom of those of his friends who dealt with me, who were of the same polical opinions with himself. This I thought barefaced enough; and I daresay you will agree with me, my friends (said the melancholy gentleman), that it was so.

Here then, were two of my best customers lost to me for ever. Nay, not only their own custom, but that of all their political partisans who happened to deal with me; for the one was fully as good as his word, and the other a great

deal better: that is to say, the one who threatened to deprive me of the custom of his friends, as well as his own, did so most effectually; while the other, who held out no such threat, did precisely the same thing by his friends, and with at least equal success.

In truth, I wanted now but to be asked to support the Radical interest to be fairly ruined; and this was a piece of good fortune that was not long denied me. "My dear Bob," —thus commenced a note, which I had, on this unhappy occasion, from an intimate friend, a rattling, rough, outspoken fellow—"As I know your political creed to be couched in the phrase—'Let who likes be king, I'll be subject'—that is, you don't care one of your own figs what faction is uppermost—I request, as a personal favour, your support for Mr. Sweepthedecks; and this I do the more readily, that I know there is no chance of your being pre-engaged. Now, you musn't refuse me, Bob, else you and I will positively quarrel; for I have promised to secure you."

Here then, you see, my friends (said the melancholy gentleman), was a climax. The unities in the system of persecution adopted against me were strictly observed. There was beginning, middle, and end complete—nothing wanting. Well—still determined to maintain my neutrality—I wrote a note to my friend, expressing precisely the same sentiments to which I have so often alluded. To this note I received no answer; and can only conjecture the effect it had upon him by the circumstance of his withdrawing his custom from me, and never again entering my shop.

Observe, however, my friends (here said the melancholy gentleman), that, in speaking of the persecutions I underwent on this occasion, I have merely selected instances—you are by no means to understand that the cases just mentioned included all the annoyance I met with on the

subject of my vote. Not at all. I have, as already said, merely instanced these cases. I was assailed by scores of others in the same way. Indeed, there was not a day, for upwards of three weeks, that I was not badgered and abused by somebody or other—ay, and that too, in my own shop. But my shop was now not worth keeping; for Whig, Tory, and Radical had deserted me, and left me to the full enjoyment of my reflections on the course I had pursued. In short, I found that, in endeavouring to offend no one, I had offended everybody; and that, in place of securing my own peace, I had taken the most effectual way I possibly could to make myself unhappy.

Well, in the meantime, you see, my friends (continued the melancholy gentleman), the election came on, and was gained by the Whig candidate. The streets were on the occasion paraded by the partisans of each of the parties; and, as is not unusual in such cases, there was a great deal of mischief done, and of which, as a sufferer, I came in for a very liberal share. The Whig mob attacked my shop, and demolished everything in it, to celebrate their triumph, as they said, by plucking a *hen*—in other words, one who would not support them. The Tory mob, again, attacked my house, and smashed every one of my windows, alleging that, as I was not a Tory, I must be a Whig; and, finally, the third estate came in, and finished what the other two had left undone, because I was not a Radical.

Here, then, gentlemen, was I, I repeat, who had offended no one, or, at least, had given no one any reasonable grounds of offence, but who, on the contrary, was most anxious to remain on friendly terms with everybody—here, I say, then, was I, surrounded with enemies, persecuted at all hands, my business dwindled away to nothing, and, lastly, my effects destroyed, to the extent of nearly all I possessed in the world. There was still, however, a small residue left; and with this I now determined to retire

to the country, and to take a small house in some sequestered place, at a distance from all other human habitations, with the view of ascertaining if I could not there secure the peace and quietness which I found the most harmless and inoffensive conduct could not procure me in society I determined, in short, to fly the face of man. Well, such a house as I wished, I, after some time, found; and to it I immediately retired. It was situated in a remote part of the country, in a romantic little glen, and several miles distant, on all hands, from any other residence—just the thing I wanted. Here at last, thought I, as I gazed on the solitude around me, I will find that peace and quiet that are so dear to me; here is no one to quarrel with me because I do not choose to think as he does—none to disturb me because I seek to disturb no one. Fatal error again!

There was a small trouting stream at a short distance from the house. I was fond of angling. I went to the river with rod and line, threw in (it was the very next day after I had taken possession of my new residence), and in the next instant found myself seized by the cuff of the neck. I had trespassed; and an immediate prosecution, notwithstanding all the concession I could make, was the consequence. The proprietor, at whose instance this proceeding took place, was a brute—a tyrant. To all my overtures, his only reply was, that he was determined to make an example of me; and this he did, to the tune of about a score of pounds. This occurrence, of course, put an immediate stop to my fishing recreations; and, at the same time, excited some suspicion in my mind as to the perfect felicity which I was likely to enjoy in my retirement. Having given up all thoughts of angling, I now took to walking, and determined to make a general inspection of the country in my neighbourhood; taking one direction one day, and another the next, and so on, till I should have seen all

around me to the extent of some miles—"And surely this," thought I to myself, "will give offence to nobody." Well, in pursuance of this resolution, I started on my first voyage of discovery; but had not proceeded far, when a beautiful shady avenue, with its gate flung invitingly open, tempted me to diverge. I entered it, and was sauntering luxuriously along, with my hat in my hand, enjoying the cool shade of the lofty umbrageous trees by which it was skirted, and admiring the beauties around me—for it was, indeed, a most lovely place. I was, in short, in a kind of delightful reverie, when all of a sudden I found myself again seized by the cuff of the neck, by a ferocious-looking fellow with a gun in his hand.

"What do you want here, sir?" said the savage, looking at me as if he would have torn me to pieces.

"Nothing, my good fellow," replied I, mildly. "I want nothing. I came here merely to enjoy a walk in this beautiful avenue."

"Then, you'll pay for your walk, I warrant you. Curse me, if you don't! You have no right here, sir. Didn't you see the ticket at the entrance, forbidding all strangers to come here?"

I declared I did not; which was true.

"Then I'll teach you to look sharper next time. Your name, sir?"

I gave it; and, in three days after, was served with a summons for another trespass, and was again severely fined.

"Strange land of liberty this!" thought I on this occasion—as, indeed, I had done on some others before—"where one dare not think as they please without making a host of enemies, and where you can neither turn to the right or the left without being taken by the neck."

I now, in short, found, gentlemen (said our melancholy friend), that I had only exchanged one scene of troubles

for another; and that even my remote and sequestered situation was no protection to me whatever from annoyance and persecution; and I therefore resolved to quit and return once more to the town, to make another trial of the justice of mankind; and in this resolution I was confirmed by a letter which I shortly after this received from the proprietor whose lands adjoined the small patch of ground that was attached to the house I resided in.

"Sir," began this new correspondent, "you must be aware that it is the business of the tenant of the house you occupy to keep the drain which passes your garden in an efficient state, throughout the length of its passage by your ground. Now, sir, it is, at present, far from being in such a condition; and the consequence is, that a large portion of my land in your neighbourhood is laid under water, to my serious loss. I therefore request that you will instantly see to this, to prevent further trouble. I am, sir," &c.

Well, gentlemen (continued our melancholy friend), to prevent this further trouble, and to keep, if possible, on goods terms with my neighbour, I went, immediately on receipt of his letter, and examined the drain in question; resolving, at the same time, to do what he requested, or rather commanded, if it could be done at a reasonable cost, although I conceived that it was a matter with which I had nothing to do. It was an affair of my landlord's altogether, I thought, especially as nothing had been said to me about the drain when I took the house—at least nothing that I recollected. However, as I have said, I determined, for peace's sake, to repair it in the meantime, and to take my landlord in my own hand for restitution. On looking at the drain, I found it indeed in a very bad state, and immediately sent for a person skilled in such matters to give me an idea of what might be the cost of putting it in a proper order; and was informed that it might be put in

very good condition, in such a state as my neighbour could not object to, for about fifty pounds. Now, gentlemen, this was precisely equal to two years' rent of my house, and, I thought, rather too large a price to pay for the good will of my neighbour; and I resisted, at the same time referring him to my landlord. My landlord said he had nothing to do with it, and that I must settle the affair with Mr. T—— the best way I could. Well, I took advice in the matter, for I thought it looked very like a conspiracy against my simplicity and good nature; and was advised by all means to resist. The result was, that my neighbour, Mr. T——, immediately commenced a suit against me; and, in my own defence, I was compelled to raise an action of relief against my landlord; so that, when I returned to town, I brought with me from my sweet, calm, peaceable retirement, a couple of full-blown law pleas of the most promising dimensions. Who would have thought it—who would have dreamt it—that, in this seclusion, this desert, as I may call it, I should have got involved in such a world of troubles? Well, gentlemen, what do you think was the result? Why, both cases were given against me. In the one, I had to pay costs—and in the other, to pay costs and repair the drain too; and (added the melancholy gentleman with a sigh) I am at this moment on my way to Edinburgh to pay the last instalment of these ruinous and iniquitious claims." And, with this, the melancholy gentleman ended the sad story of his sufferings.

We all pitied him from our hearts, and each in his own way offered him the condolence that his case demanded.

He thanked us for the sympathy we expressed, and said that he felt encouraged by it to ask our advice as to how he should conduct himself in future, so as to obtain the peace and quiet he so earnestly desired.

"What would you recommend me to do, gentlemen—where would you advise me to go," he said, in an implor-

ing and despairing tone—nay, we thought half crying—"to escape this merciless and unprovoked persecution?"

We were all much affected by this piteous appeal, and felt every desire to afford such counsel to our ill-used friend as might be of service to him; but, while we did so, we felt also the extreme difficulty of the case; for we did not see by what possible line of conduct he could escape persecution, if the very harmless and inoffensive one which he had hitherto, of his own accord, adopted, had been found ineffectual for his protection.

Indeed, it was the very, nay, the only one, which, *a priori*, we would have recommended to him; but, as he had clearly shown us that it was an ineffectual one, we really felt greatly at a loss what to say; and, under this difficulty, we all remained for some time thoughtful and silent. At length, however, it was agreed amongst us, as the case was a poser, that we should sleep on the matter, and in the morning come prepared with such advice as our intervening cogitations should suggest.

The melancholy gentleman again thanked us for the kind interest we took in his unhappy case; adding, that he was now so disheartened, so depressed in spirits, by the usage he had met with, that he almost felt it an obligation to be allowed to live.

As it was now wearing late, and our landlord had just come in to announce that supper was ready, and would be served up when ordered, we agreed to rest satisfied for the night with the extempore autobiographies, as I may call them, of our two worthy companions—the little hunch-backed personage in the bright yellow waistcoat, and the melancholy gentleman; but we, at the same time, resolved that we would resume the same mode of entertainment on the following evening, and continue it till every one had contributed his quota.

GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY.

On the 15th of September, 17—, an unusual stir was observable in our village. The people were gathered in little groups in the streets, with earnest and awe-stricken countenances; and even the little children had ceased their play, and, clinging to their mothers, looked up as if wondering what strange thing had happened. In some parts of the town the crowds were larger, but the remarks less audible; at times, two or three individuals were seen passing along, in grave conversation, while the women stood in groups at their own or their neighbour's doors, many of them with tears in their eyes, and giving utterance occasionally to sounds of lamentation. It was evident, to the most casual observer, that something unusual had occurred—something that had stricken a feeling approaching to alarm into all hearts—and that all were engaged in the discussion of one common topic. There was that gathering together, as if for mutual support, or for the purposes of sympathy and consultation, which usually attends the appearance of public danger, the extent of which is unknown. It seemed, indeed, as if the occurrence of an earthquake, however much it might have increased the alarm, could not have deepened the gloom. The night at length gradually thickened, and, one by one, the villagers crept into their dwellings. Many a fearful tale was told by the firesides that night; and not a door but was more carefully barred than it had been perhaps for years before.

Our village was like many other villages in Scotland: it was long, dirty, and irregular, and wholly wanting in those qualities of neatness and taste which give a character

of comfort and rustic beauty to the generality of English hamlets. The odour that rose from the fronts of the cottages was not from flowers, and was certainly much less agreeable to the senses. The situation, however, was romantic; and there was a character of rusticity about the place which harmonised well with the surrounding scenery. On one side it was skirted by a water, which, in rainy seasons, struggled into some importance, and turned two or three respectable mills. On the other, the country undulated gracefully, and rose at one point into a wooded hill, which formed no inconsiderable feature in the landscape. Striking off the main road, at a point about half-a-mile distant, was a rough by-road, which crossed near the summit of the hill, and wound upwards till it disappeared in a ridge of still loftier mountains. This road formed a favourite walk with the young people of the village. It was rough, and shaded, and retired, and led to many a green spot and glorious upland. On very dark nights, however, it was usually avoided. A considerable part of it was overarched with thick foliage; and however pleasant at noonday, when the hot breezes came panting thither for relief, it needed rather a stout heart to pass whistling through it, when not even a gleam of starlight was visible, and when every sound of the rustling branches came to the ear of the listener, as a groan, a shriek, or a wailing.

It was towards this road, on the morning succeeding the ominous appearances we have described, that many of the villagers directed their steps. A good number were hastening thither soon after daybreak, and one and all seemed bent on the same errand. They entered the road, now chequered with the wakening glints of the sun, and proceeded onwards till they came to a break in the rough wall, which bounded it on either side. They here struck off, and followed the windings of a narrow footpath, till they reached an open place which looked into the fields

beyond. There was a bush of underwood a good deal dashed and torn; and those who had a better eyesight, or a more active fancy than the rest, declared they could trace the sprinklings of blood upon the grass. On that spot, not many hours before, a murder had been committed. A young woman, one of the loveliest and liveliest of the village, had been desperately and cruelly murdered.

The affair was involved in mystery.

Jessie Renton, the deceased, was the daughter of respectable parents in the village, and a favourite with young and old. She was warm-hearted and playful; and, pass her when you might, she always greeted you with a kind glance or a merry word. On the evening which closed on her for ever, she had gone out alone, as she had done a thousand times before, with a laughing eye and a light step. Her father had not returned from his daily toil, and her mother had not ceased from hers. The latter was busy at her wheel when Jessie left, and not a parting word was exchanged between them. They knew not that they were never to see each other alive again in this world, and they parted without thought or word. It was not known where the unfortunate girl had gone. She had passed the doctor's shop while his apprentice boy was squirting water from a syringe; and, joking, she had told him she would "tell his maister o' his tricks." She had chatted with two girls who were fetching water from the well, and hinted something about an approaching wedding. An old man had seen her at the outskirts of the village; and a cow-herd urchin thought—but "wasna sure"—that he had seen her entering the road leading through the wood; and that was all. Some hours after she had been thus traced, a couple of strolling pedlars had been making for the village, and were startled by a shriek and a cry of murder in the thicket. They rushed in; but had some difficulty in finding the spot whence the cry proceeded. The figure of a man dashed by them at

some yards distance. They hallooed to him; but he passed on, and was out of sight in a moment. A few stifled cries led them to the fatal spot, where they found the wretched girl stretched upon the ground, faint from the loss of blood, and unable to articulate. One of the men supported her, while the other ran for help. The latter had scarcely reached the main road, when he met some labourers plodding homewards, and with them he returned to the dying girl; but what assistance could they render? Life was fast ebbing away; and, in a few moments afterwards, they bent in dumb horror and amazement, over a mangled corpse. After some consultation, they carried the body towards the village; and one of them hastened before and procured a vehicle to relieve them of their burthen. The news of what had occurred spread in all directions; and, by the time the mournful procession entered the village, the inhabitants were all astir. The body was soon recognised; tears and wailings followed; and dark suspicions and dismal regrets mingled with the hurried inquiries of every new comer.

Old James Renton and his wife, as decent a couple as lived in the village, were seated by the fire, enjoying their quiet evening chat, when the awful intelligence reached them. Some considered it strange that they had been talking but a few minutes before of their daughter, and her prospects. But it was not strange: they had no other child: they had had no other theme so interesting. It was not a new thing with them. For themselves they had but little to hope, but little to dream over: their own ambition had long since died out, but it revived in their child. She was a link which bound them anew to this world, and seemed to open up to them, once more, bright prospects on this side of the grave. Often and often had they conversed upon her hopes, as they had aforetime done of their own; and with an interest only heightened

from having become less selfish. Was it remarkable that they should do so on that evening? Jessie was growing to a most interesting age. She had arrived at that point in life from which many roads diverge, and where the path is often difficult to choose. For her sake, more than one homely hind had become a poet in his feelings. Indeed, she had many admirers, and was even what some might call a flirt. But, although her smiles were shed like the free and glad sunshine on all, there was one who, to appearance, was more favoured than the rest. This young man had known her from her childhood, and his attachment was of the most ardent kind. At school, he had been her champion, and certainly showed himself a true knight—ready to encounter, nay, courting danger for her sake, and conceiving himself sufficiently rewarded by her smile. She had recently been solicited in marriage by another, a man of retired and somewhat gloomy habits, who dwelt near; but it was understood that she had refused his offer, and that George Merrideth was the chosen one of her heart.

It was on these things that the unconscious parents were conversing, when one of their neighbours entered with the frightful intelligence. Both started up and rushed to the door. The crowd were hastening on, bearing with them the melancholy evidence of the truth of what they had just heard. It came on still—it stopt—it was at their own door it stopt. The old man could not speak, but his wife rushed forward with a distressful shriek. The truth was soon all known. They had no child. They had only a dead body to weep over—to lay in the grave. Is it necessary to say more? A few days passed. They were the bitterest days the bereaved parents had ever known; but they passed, and their minds became comparatively calm. Neither the efforts of their own minds, nor the commiseration of their friends and neighbours, could sub-

due their grief: but it took free vent, and subsided from very exhaustion. They evinced but little anxiety to discover who had destroyed their child: it was enough to them that she was gone; and revenge, they said, would not bring her back. Their chief solace was to visit and linger in the church-yard—their chief hope to abide there.

To discover the murderer, and drag him to justice, soon occupied the attention, not only of the authorities, but of many active men in the village. Rigorous inquiries were instituted, every scrap of evidence was collected, and suspicion fell at length upon one man. This individual was, to appearance, about thirty years of age, of a thoughtful disposition, and retired mode of life. He had been settled in the village for several years; and no sooner was the suspicion raised, than many circumstanees were bruited to confirm it. His general conduct and bearing were remarked to have been mysterious. He had rarely associated with his neighbours; and had often been observed, in lonely places and at silent hours, muttering and musing, by himself. For some time back, he had been noticed watching the deceased, and following her whenever she had any distance to go; and the general belief was, that she had crossed his affections, and that he had taken this cowardly revenge. On the evening of the murder, he had been seen returning home only a few minutes after the time when the deed must have been perpetrated, and his air and manner were said to have been wild and agitated. The consequence was, that he was apprehended and thrown into prison. In a few months afterwards, he was tried. In his defence, he stated that the unfortunate girl had rather encouraged his suit than otherwise; and mentioned, in proof of this, that Merrideth, whose grief for her loss had excited general commiseration, had on the very afternoon of the day on which the murder took place, quarrelled him on the subject, and accused him of seeking him to

supplant him in her affections. Ultimately, a verdict of not proven was returned, and he was dismissed from the court.

Jones—for such was his name—returned to the village; but the suspicion still clung to him. As he went through the streets, the people avoided him, or gazed at him as a world's wonder. Wherever he passed, they spoke to each other in whispers. These whispers he seldom heard, but the thought of their import haunted him. He was restless and unhappy, and sought relief in motion. No sooner was the sun risen, than he was up and away to the fields. He wandered about alone for hours, and then came back to the village. He felt as if a curse rested on him; a stain on his name, which he could not wipe off. So unhappy did he seem, that some men began to take compassion on him, and even to converse with him. He felt grateful; the tears rushed to his eyes; and they left him with their suspicions confirmed. Night came, and he felt that he could not sleep. He sometimes tried to read, but in vain: and would suddenly dash down the book and hurry into the street.

In one of his rambles, an incident occurred, which, although trifling in itself, may yet be related as showing the kind of feeling with which he was regarded. Miss Manners, the daughter of the village clergyman, accompanied by another young lady, was coming along in a direction in which they could not avoid meeting him. Jones observed the latter hesitate, on beholding him, and apparently refuse to go on, till encouraged by her companion. They met, however, and passed each other; but Jones had not proceeded many yards, when he observed a silk bag which one of them had dropped. He picked it up and hastened after them. The young lady, on hearing his footsteps, glanced round and screamed outright. Jones paused. When the affrighted damsel had somewhat recovered herself, he said in a soft voice—

"Young lady! I am sorry if my politeness has alarmed you. I thought this might be your bag, which I found lying on the road."

Miss Manners stepped towards him, and received it, saying—"Thank you, sir. My companion is foolish."

"I cannot blame her," he replied, "for she does not know me. I have rather to thank you, than wonder at her."

His voice was rather tremulous as he spoke; and Miss Manners regarded him with a look of the tenderest compassion. Nothing more, however, was said. They simply bowed to each other and parted. Jones walked on for a short distance, then, leaning over a rustic gate by the roadside, mused till his eyes filled.

The violent emotion exhibited by the unhappy man was not allowed to pass unnoticed by the villagers. It was looked upon only as the writhing of a tortured spirit; and whatever doubts existed as to his guilt, they were soon all removed. There was hardly a soul in the village but shunned and feared him.

Sometimes Jones would drop into one or two shops where he had been accustomed to visit, and talk freely on matters of common interest. But those who formerly saw nothing odd in his manner, now discovered a thousand peculiarities. They imagined they detected an unnatural wildness in his eye, and set him down as a deep and dangerous man. At one time the villagers would stand gazing after him, at others they would pass him with a scowl. Little children, whom he used sometimes to pat on the head were taught to fear and avoid him; and often, when he approached, would run away screaming to their homes.

The unhappy man, at length, resolved to leave the place. He pursued his journey to Edinburgh, and took lodgings in a street in the Old Town. The reflection, however, that he

had left behind him a blasted reputation—poisoned all his enjoyments. He walked backward and forward in Princes, Street, crossed the North Bridge, and wandered about the Canongate and High Street, and tried to lose himself in the crowd. Again he returned to his lodging, and felt that his loneliness and misery were increased.

He next set off for Glasgow, and pursued there the same course. He traversed the Trongate and Argyle Street for hours, and strode down to the Broomielaw, and stared vacantly at the bustle going on on the river. But in nothing could he take any interest. Change of scene could bring no change to his mind. Weeks and months were spent in this rambling and unsatisfactory life, and again he resolved to retrace his steps to the village.

The coach in which he took his seat set him down within about a mile and a half of the place; and he finished the journey on foot. It was on a Saturday afternoon that he entered, and with feelings which can hardly be described. Many of the villagers were sitting at their doors, enjoying the cool air of the evening, when the mysterious man walked up the main street. His appearance attracted general attention. One rumour had stated that he had fled to America; another, that he had taken away his own life. At all events, the people had congratulated themselves on his sudden departure; and felt irritated, as well as surprised, at his return. As he walked quietly along, he was followed by a number of boys, some of whom threw pieces of turf at him; and, by the time he reached the centre of the town a considerable crowd was collected. A disposition to riot was soon exhibited, and stones began to be thrown. Jones turned coolly round and folded his arms, as if in defiance of his persecutors. At that moment, a stone of a pretty large size struck him on the forehead, and some blood trickled from the wound. He was a man of a quick eye and muscular frame. He singled out the

person who threw it, and dashed through the crowd—never once losing sight of him until he had him firmly in his grasp. A struggle ensued, and Jones threw his opponent with great force on the ground. Loud threats, and angry imprecations followed; and "Villain!—Murderer!" burst from a hundred tongues. Ten or a dozen men sprang forward upon him at once; but he started back and eluded their grasp.

"Stand back!" he cried in a loud voice. "I shall strike the first man to the earth who dares to lay a finger on me!"

For a moment his pursuers were awed; but only for a moment. Two or three hands were in an instant at his throat, and a violent struggle and altercation ensued.

"Villain!—villain!" cried one man, older than the rest, "ye hae killed ane o' the sweetest bairns that ever drew breath. It was an evil hour when ye took up your abode in this village!"

"Hold off, old man!" exclaimed Jones; "why do you persecute me so?"

Groans and yells followed.

"I swear before God," he continued, shaking himself free, "that I am innocent of this crime!"

The crowd, however, were not to be deterred from giving vent to their rage; and matters might have proceeded to an alarming height, had not Mr. Manners, the parish minister, who chanced to be passing at the time, interfered in his behalf. The old man pushed his way through the crowd, and taking Jones by the arm, succeeded in dragging him away. They proceeded in the direction of the manse; but, as the mob still followed, Mr. Manners did not think it safe to leave him. He accordingly took him in along with him; and, closing the garden gate, exhorted the crowd to return peaceably to their homes.

For a few moments, some shouting and noise were

heard; but they died away by degrees, and Jones and his protector stood alone in the quiet and secluded garden. The former grasped Mr. Manners by the hand, and thanked him cordially.

"Sir," he said, "I have been sorely abused. An unhappy suspicion has clung to my name; but innocent I declare I am, although suffering the worst consequences of guilt. All men have some sins to weep for; but, as I shall answer to my Maker, I swear that I am as innocent of the great crime laid to my charge as the unborn child is."

Mr. Manners was a kind-hearted man. He was struck with the earnestness—the quiet and subdued fervour with which Jones addressed him—and, taking him kindly by the hand—

"Young man," he said, "I am bound to believe what I cannot disprove, and what you so solemnly affirm. If there be no truth in your words, you may yet repent having so solemnly sworn; but whether true or false, I can never repent doing you an act of kindness."

Jones was invited into the house to rest—an invitation which he gladly accepted. On entering the lobby, they were met by Miss Manners, who started involuntarily on beholding the stranger; but instantly recovered herself, and opened the door of the parlour for him to enter. The latter bowed politely to her; and, blushing, she returned the salutation. Her father desired her to walk in and set some wine upon the table, which she did with alacrity and grace.

Miss Manners was a young lady of rather an eccentric disposition. She was high-minded, and high-spirited, and not without a dash of romance. She was, of course, familiar with the story of the murder, and knew Jones well by sight. His appearance, which others regarded as at least mysterious-looking, seemed, in her eyes, rather prepossessing than otherwise; and when she heard the old

women in the village imprecating curses on his head, she had uniformly reproved them for judging without adequate proof. On the present occasion, there was something in Jones' looks and manner peculiarly calculated to confirm her good impression, and engage her sympathy. His collar was loosened, and his dress a good deal dashed by the rough treatment he had experienced; but the expression of his countenance seemed to plead for compassion, and spoke eloquently to her heart. She addressed him in a kindly tone of voice; inquired what was the matter, and hoped that no accident had occurred. The stranger put his hand to his brow, from which the blood had been previously wiped, and turned towards the window; while her father briefly explained the circumstances of their meeting, of the harsh treatment to which Jones had been subjected, and of his own interference.

"You did well father!" said the girl; "the people may be mistaken!"

"They *are* mistaken!" said Jones, turning round with moist eyes. "I know not why suspicion should have settled upon me. I led a quiet life in the village, harming no one, offending no one; neither had I exhibited any of those vices in which great crimes usually originate. I was not cruel, revengeful, or choleric: least of all had I shown unkindness to her whom they accuse me of having murdered. Lady, I cannot expect that you will believe the word of an accused, I may almost say a condemned, man; but I shall live in hope that something may yet arise to convince you that I am innocent!"

A reply rushed to her lips, but she checked it, and pressed the stranger to take some refreshment.

Mr. Manners expressed a hope that the people would not annoy him farther; and his daughter ventured to question him as to his returning to a place where he was exposed to such insult and persecution.

"Madam," he replied, "where else could I be happy, with such a stigma on my character? A man's evil deeds are always more widely trumpeted than his good ones; and go where I would, I know that the slander would follow me. I have taken a solemn vow, never again to leave this place till I can do so with an unsullied character. The feeling that makes a man eager to trace a calumny to its source, and exculpate himself in the eyes of the world, deters me from flying from reproach. No! I will meet my accusers boldly. I have done nothing to cause me to leave the place; and what others may say or do, will not drive me from it."

Both Mr. Manners and his daughter pressed him to stay to supper, but he declined. He expressed, as well as words could express, how grateful he felt for their kindness, and was about to depart, when the old gentleman laid one hand on his shoulder, and, grasping his hand frankly with the other, said—

"Till it has been proved that you are undeserving of my hospitality, my door shall always be open to you; and the more readily, that others are closed!"

Jones was a good deal affected, but struggled to conceal his emotion.

"No," he articulated, with a slightly faltering voice, but a steady eye, "I will not trouble you with a friendship which might bring odium on you. I need not say how delightful it would be to me; but"——

"My father," interrupted Miss Manners, "can easily bear a little burden to lighten another's great one. Can you not, father?"

"My good child," he replied, "you know me, and can speak for me. Sir," he added, "my good wishes and prayers attend you."

Jones took his leave, with many expressions of gratitude, when Mr. Manners came running after him, with his

hat on, to see whether the crowd had wholly dispersed, and resolved to accompany him if necessary. On reaching the road, however, it was discovered that everything was perfectly quiet; and the good man, having escorted him only a short distance on his way, left him to his reflections.

It would be difficult to describe the train of thought which passed through Jones' mind, as he directed his steps towards the centre of the village. Buoyant feelings and hopes, such as he had not experienced for years before, suddenly filled his breast: glimmerings of bright thought flashed on his mind; were speedily checked, and again burst forth. Some of the people were lounging about their doors as he passed; but he heeded not—he cared not. He felt happy. Visions of mild grey eyes and chesnut ringlets engrossed his senses. They were Miss Manners'. A low but sweet voice filled his ears. It was hers. His memory recalled certain kindly expressions; and it was her lips that had uttered them. On arriving at his lodging, he thought the way had been short; he entered, and was welcomed by his old landlady, with whom he had lived for years, and who was one of the few who would listen to nothing to his discredit.

That night, Jones sat up long, and thought much. The window of his room looked down upon the glen, the stream, the corn-mill, and across to the high and wooded banks, and upwards to where, on this particular night, the full round moon climbed, and threw a glittering bar of light upon the water; and never, to the eye of our lonely muser, looked so lonely, or shone upon so fair a scene. If, at that moment, he harboured an evil thought or an angry feeling, it soon melted in the rising tide of holier emotions. The quiet and softness of the night became, for the time, a portion of his own being; and the pale light, resting on his features, communicated to them much of its gentleness and beauty. For several hours he continued in deep

reverie. At length he began to feel chilly, as the thin watery light, which precedes the dawn, made its appearance; and he reluctantly withdrew to rest; but only to dream over the images of beauty with which his mind was surcharged.

Next morning broke forth—a benign and balmy Sabbath. He was the earliest at church, and lingered the latest in the church-yard. The subject of Mr. Manners' discourse was charity; but when the people came out, they passed by Jones with a scowl, and went on their several ways, talking mysteriously together. Jones, however, had again seen Miss Manners. It is uncertain whether or not he threw himself in her way; but, whether from design or accident, their eyes met. She bowed gracefully to him; but he was not prepared for this public recognition. For the moment he felt confused, his heart fluttered, and he passed on with two or three hurried steps. This incident, trifling as it was, deprived him of a whole night's sleep. He feared he had betrayed some awkwardness on the occasion; and yet, somehow or other, he had no fear of obtaining her forgiveness. Often and often he walked in the neighbourhood of the manse, avoiding being seen by her, but still seeing her; or, if not, indulging the delight of being near her. He had no heart to walk in any other direction. If he strolled out in the morning, or in the quiet of the evening, he proceeded almost instinctively towards the manse; and if he passed any distance beyond it, an irresistible impulse caused him to retrace his steps.

These lonely walks, often at unseasonable hours, and without any apparent object, were not unobserved by the villagers, and gave rise to much speculation. Many weeks passed, and still the mystery continued; and Jones found, ere long, that he was regarded not only with suspicion, but terror. All the petty crimes, too, which occurred in the neighbourhood, were set down to his charge; and time,

which he thought would clear his name, seemed only to blacken it the more. Every means, too, were taken to persecute him, and drive him from the place; but absence to him was now despair. He was chained to the spot by an uncontrollable destiny; and felt that, although pressed to the uttermost, he was yet wholly incapable of retreat.

Jones was proprietor of a small property in the village, which had been left him by an uncle, and which first induced him to take up his residence in that quarter; he had also a small sum of money laid out at interest; and, both together, had hitherto yielded him a sufficient competency.

One by one, however, the houses on which he chiefly relied became tenantless, and nothing seemed to await him but poverty and wretchedness.

But then Miss Manners! Like a star in the heavens, she became brighter as his prospects darkened; and yet he feared that, like a star, he could only admire her at a distance. He had told his love to the listening winds; he had whispered it to his pillow; he had mingled his plaint with that of the running brooks. But, to human ear, he had breathed it neither in sighs nor words. Him, a wanderer and an outcast, what maid could ever love? Could he have asked Miss Manners to share happiness with him, the case might have been otherwise; but what must be his fate when he had only wretchedness to offer? He thought of her till she became purely a being of his imagination; and, being all that his imagination could paint her, she became too much for him to hope ever to possess.

It is difficult to say what, at this early stage of their acquaintance, were Miss Manners' feelings towards Jones. Certain it is, however, that she had conceived for him a kind of romantic interest. She was eccentric in her disposition, but fervent in her attachments; and, without knowing much about him, she had, partly from compassion and

partly, perhaps, from a secret love of being regarded singular, uniformly advocated his cause whenever occasion offered.

One evening, two or three young girls were assembled at the manse. They were the daughters of a person of some consideration in the place, and Miss Manners' occasional associates. After tea, Mr. Manners withdrew to his studies; and, as the evening had set in rather cold, the ladies drew near the fire to converse.

"Come, now," said Miss Manners, as she stirred the fire till it blazed and crackled right merrily, "let us make ourselves comfortable and happy. Emily, here"—sitting down beside the dullest of her guests—"looks as sad as if she had just lost her sweetheart."

"Oh, she'll be thinking of Willie Green!" said another of the girls.

A third giggled. Emily looked sad; and Miss Manners cheered her by remarking that Willie was a very decent fellow.

"He's no sweetheart of mine," said Emily, indifferently, at the same time glancing up to the ceiling.

An enormous "Good gracious!" or some such expression, rushed to the eyes of another of the girls; but, as Miss Manners had checked her, she did not get telling how often she had seen her and Willie together, and how well known it was that the day was all but fixed.

"Now, don't tease her," said Miss Manners. "I see we must change the subject."

Accordingly, Willie Green was dismissed, and William Jones introduced. Every one, except Miss Manners, had something to say against him—some frightful story to relate in which he had acted a principal part. One told how, on one evening—darker than all other evenings—he had been seen lounging in the neighbourhood of such and such a farm; and how, next morning, one of the farmer's children

died. Another related how he had been heard to rave to himself when he thought no one was near; and many were the extraordinary casualties in which he was declared to have been concerned.

"Pshaw! idle tales," said Miss Manners, who had sat for some time silent. "I have seen the man, and do not think him one-half so bad as he is represented. Never yet have I met any one who had seen him do a wrong action; and yet every one will swell the cry against him. O world! world!"

The young ladies were somewhat surprised at the serious tone in which Miss Manners spoke, but laughed it off, without attempting to argue the matter. How little did they know—how little did Miss Manners know—that, at that very time, the man they spoke of was wandering in the darkness, not far off, with his eyes fixed on the lighted window of the room in which they sat! And, O, what feelings would have filled the breast of poor Jones, if he had known that the light on which he gazed so intently was rendered still brighter by those eyes which he loved best in the world being kindled in his defence.

However, the conversation soon took a lighter turn; and was only interrupted, at length, by the appearance of Willie Green, who was ushered in "by accident," and seemed very desirous to impress upon all present that he had no particular errand. Sly looks were interchanged, which no one, of course, saw; and Willie was speedily inducted as one of the party. Supper followed, at which Mr. Manners was present; and, when the hour of departure came, Miss Manners threw on her bonnet, to trot them, as she expressed it, to the garden gate.

On going down the walk, Mr. Green, who was the pink of politeness, offered Miss Manners his arm; but the latter knew she would not offend him by refusing. One by one, he applied to the other girls; till, as a last resource, he

made an appeal to Emily, who, after some feeble show of following their example, relented; and, while Miss Manners and the rest proceeded onwards, Green and Emily lagged gradually behind. Miss Manners escorted the party a considerable distance on their way, and then bade them good night. Mr. Green offered to accompany her back; but she broke off, saying she was not afraid. The night was rather dark; but, in truth, it was not late; and she tripped on her way homewards without fear of molestation.

As she approached the garden, however, she saw the figure of a man walking on before her, with that slow and apparently lounging step which indicates the absence of any pressing or definite object. It was Jones. Her heart failed her for a moment; but, instantly recovering herself, she proceeded on her way, and passed him. It was dark. There was no one else near. A rush of frightful thoughts came upon her mind; her step faltered; and she felt as if about to faint.

This was a moment, with Jones, of intense—of overwhelming emotion. He had heard her light step behind him, but knew not that it was hers. No sooner, however, had her graceful form caught his eye, than a strange wildness of thought and feeling seized him, approaching almost to delirium. She was alone. He had long wished for such an opportunity to declare his passion; and yet, now that it had arrived, he trembled to embrace it. To allow it to pass was, in all probability, to entail upon himself many more weeks or months of racking anxiety, uncertainty, and suspense; and yet to embrace it was, perhaps, to set the last seal to his despair. On such a subject he could have debated for weeks; but now, the least hesitation, and the opportunity was lost.

While these contending thoughts distracted his mind, Miss Manners started, and almost paused, as if seized with a sudden panic. This fixed his resolution.

"Dear lady!" he said, in a bland and tremulous voice, "you seem frightened. I trust it is not of me you are afraid. Believe me, you are near one who would protect, not harm you."

"Who are you?" she inquired, faintly.

"Who am I?" he replied. "In truth, I can hardly tell you who I am. I am one, madam, lost both to himself and the world—an outcast—a wanderer in solitary places—a madman—a dreamer! O, sweet lady!—but I am wrong to speak thus."

"I know you now," she said, gaining courage; "your name is Jones, is it not?"

"Ay, madam," he answered, "that is my unfortunate name; but, if the world knew all—or if you knew all, I would not care for the world."

"Tell me," she said, but with some hesitation, as if in doubt whether it was proper to stay.

"I will, if you'll forgive me," he said; "but my story is, perhaps, long. Will you walk on?"

Miss Manners proceeded slowly along, with Jones at her side.

"I have now," resumed the latter, "resided for nearly six years in this village. In my intercourse with the world I had been unfortunate, and retirement was what I sought. I found it here; and, between the study of books and nature, I felt myself happy, and associated but little with my neighbours. I do not weary you?"

"No," said Miss Manners; "go on."

"At length," he continued, "I began to feel that marriage would be an addition to my happiness; and, accordingly, I cast my eyes round among the fair maidens of the village. They fell upon the unfortunate Jessie Renton. She lived within a few doors of me, and I had often seen and admired her in my walks. I thought I loved her—for, at that time, I had not learned what true love was—

and offered to make her my wife. I dealt candidly and openly with her. In education, I need not say that I knew she was much beneath me; but she seemed warm-hearted and docile, and I thought it would be a loving pastime for me to make her my pupil. I was not ignorant, however, that she had other lovers; and, although she certainly encouraged my addresses, I saw reason to discontinue my suit. About this time, the awful event took place, the particulars of which are already known to you; and, simply because I had been abroad on the evening of the murder, and near the fatal spot, and partly, no doubt, from the circumstance of my attachment, which I had taken no pains to conceal, suspicion fastened upon me. I will not—indeed I cannot—tell you what laceration of feeling—what distraction of mind—I have since suffered. But you—you, O lady! is it wonderful that I should love you?—you who, when all the world was against me, spoke kindly to me?—you——forgive me, but I love—I adore you; day and night you have been my dream—my idol! But I rave; and yet, do not think me quite mad; for I know I am partly so, and madness knows not itself. O lady!—pardon me! but my heart will not let my tongue speak, lest it should wrong it—could my *heart* speak, could"——

"Sir—sir!" interrupted Miss Manners; "this is frenzy! I beg, sir, you will desist. So sudden—so"——

"Sudden!" exclaimed Jones. "My love may have been sudden; but, for weeks, for months, it has taken possession of me. But, pardon me, madam," he added, in a calmer tone. "Do not mistake me. I know too well that I dare not hope; but an humble offering may be laid upon a lofty shrine. All I ask is your compassion; say only you pity me, and I shall embalm the words in my memory for ever!"

Miss Manners *did* pity him; but begged him, as he valued his own happiness, to banish from his mind all such thoughts as he had expressed.

"Ah, madam," said he, "ask me to part with life, and I may obey you; but, while life remains, I never can cease to love you."

They had now reached the entrance to the garden; and Miss Manners held out her hand, saying—

"Good night."

Jones took the hand. There was no glove on it; and, gently raising it, he pressed it to his lips.

"Madam," he articulated, "good night; farewell. While you are asleep, I shall be thinking of you. On this road, gazing on the window of the room in which I think you are, I shall enjoy more rest than anywhere else I can go."

He was about to add something more; but his utterance became choked; and, again pressing her hand to his lips, while a tear fell on it, he turned abruptly away. Miss Manners said not a word—her heart was too full—but closed the gate behind her and disappeared. Jones listened. He heard her step as she went up the gravel walk, and he heard nothing more. The night was, by this time, fearfully dark, and everything around him was silent. He walked on a short distance, returned, and again walked on. His mind was whirling and confused. He tried to recollect every word which Miss Manners had said, and by this means to get at the real state of her feelings; but he was too much agitated for reflection. On gaining his lodging, he felt faint, and put himself immediately to bed. All night long he tossed about in sleepless excitement; and, in the morning, fell into a feverish doze, broken by unintelligible dreams. When he awoke, he rose up, and felt so giddy as to be unable to stand, and again went to bed. During the day, he felt shivering and unwell; and, the next day, the same symptoms continued, and with increased violence. Another day arrived—another, and another—and all consciousness left him. Several weeks elapsed, and found him still bedridden, but convalescent; and it

was nearly three months before he was enabled to venture out, and then only when the sun was warm.

"You have been long out, Marion," said Mr. Manners to his daughter, as she returned from her accidental interview with Jones. "I was afraid some accident had befallen you."

"No," said Miss Manners, whose eyes were slightly inflamed; for, somehow or other, she had wept before entering the house: "no accident."

"Child," said her father, "what has happened—you look ill!"

Miss Manners told all—her meeting with Jones, and his passionate declaration; but, notwithstanding that her father conjured her not to think of him, she thought of him all night long.

The news of Jones' illness spread rapidly through the village; but, as might be expected, excited little sympathy. With the exception of Mr. Manners and the surgeon of the village, no one looked near his abode; and many were the remarks made by the gossips, that few tears would be shed for him, and that he might bless heaven he was allowed to die in bed. From the manse, however, he received much attention. Anxious inquiries concerning the state of his health were made almost daily, accompanied, occasionally, with presents of wine and jellies. This afforded Jones delightful materials for reflection; and, while his health continued to improve, he occupied his mind with dreams of the future, which his better judgment told him were too bright ever to be realised.

It was on a mild spring morning that the poor invalid sallied forth, for the first time, since his illness. He was still rather pale and feeble; but the air was warm for the season, and he felt happy on being released from his confinement. His appearance, as he walked through the village, brought the people to their doors as before; and the

old remarks about "the man that was tried for murder," were made from mouth to mouth. Nevertheless, he was allowed to pass unmolested, and was soon clear of the houses. The effect of natural scenery, and more particularly, perhaps, of the weather, on the animal spirits, has often been remarked, and the pleasing train of thought which now passed through the mind of our hero, might partly have arisen from this cause. The sun was unshaded, and the road warm and dry. On either side, the leaves were budding from the hedges, and the cheerful warbling of birds infused a delicious and summer-like feeling into his heart. He had gone out without any precise object, and merely to enjoy a walk in the fresh air—so delightful after long confinement to a sick chamber; but his steps had led him almost involuntarily in the direction of the manse. On reaching the gate, he stopped, loitered on for a few yards, and again stopped. He then turned back and hesitated, and at last made bold to enter. As he wound his way slowly up the walk, which was neatly laid off on either side with flowers and shrubbery, he felt more collected than, under the circumstances, he could have imagined possible; and, in a few moments, he was seated in the neat drawing-room of the manse, pouring out his gratitude to Miss Manners for the kindness and attention he had experienced during his illness.

While the two sat conversing together, Mr. Manners entered. He congratulated Jones on his recovery; but the latter did not fail to observe that his manner towards him was less frank than formerly. The truth is, that the old man was a good deal alarmed for his daughter, whom he had warned to discourage his addresses; and, although desirous to treat him with kindness, endeavoured to avoid everything which might seem an approval of his suit. Jones had the good sense not to prolong his visit; and, after cordially repeating his thanks for the

various acts of kindness he had experienced, rose up and took his leave.

To her poor lover, Miss Manners had never appeared so lovely as on this occasion. He left the house with the intention of never beholding her more; but scarcely had he quitted her presence, than he felt that to remain long away were impossible. Her beauty; her goodness; her kind words; her kinder looks; all—all rushed to his mind; and his feelings, which had been somewhat calmed by his illness, acquired even more than their wonted fire. Day after day, as he continued to gather strength, he revisited all his old haunts, and felt as if he had just returned from a sojourn in a distant land. Everything was new and fresh; but, with every scene, old feelings were associated. To him Miss Manners was still the presiding genius of the place, from whom it derived all its beauty, and to whom the worship of his heart was involuntarily offered.

Meanwhile, Miss Manners had received strict injunctions from her father not to receive his visits except when he himself was at home. To this course he had been urged, not so much by his own feelings towards him, as by the advice of his friends. Indeed, Jones was rather a favourite with him. He would willingly have done much to serve him; and yet, when the happiness of his daughter was at stake, he often reflected on the awful consequences which might ensue, if he were really the guilty wretch whom so many suspected he was.

About this time a circumstance occurred, which put an end to his doubts.

Among those who mourned the unhappy fate of the poor village maiden, the grief of her lover, George Merrideth, had been observed to be the wildest. For some days, he had wandered about like one demented; and all who witnessed, respected and commiserated his anguish.

Latterly, however, he had disappeared entirely from the public view; and it was hinted by some, that his mind had been seriously affected by the occurrence. One morning, Mr. Manners was suddenly sent for to attend at his death-bed. When he entered, the patient had fallen into a kind of dozing sleep; and he was motioned to a seat near the bed. The light was almost entirely excluded from the chamber; and the only other person present was the mother of the dying lad, who was a widow. She was wasted with grief and watching, and seemed just such a figure as a painter would have chosen to heighten the melancholy of such a scene. As she came round and whispered some scarcely articulate words into the clergyman's ear, her son murmured in his sleep, became restless, and woke as in terror. Mr. Manners spoke to him in soothing words, and referred to a state of happiness hereafter.

"Aha!" cried he, "can I enter heaven with my hand bloody? Her spirit is sainted. I could not go near it. Oh no—no—never—never."

"Of what is it he speaks?" inquired Mr. Manners.

"Oh, sir!" answered his mother, "his thoughts are wandering. I canna think he killed the lassie he loved."

"Ay, mother," said the youth, with an effort, "this hand did it. O fool!—cut it off—off with it—it is not my hand—my hand never would have done it. Oh—oh—mother—Jessie."

Mr. Manners was dumb with amazement. It was but too evident from whence the agony of the youth flowed, and he sat regarding him with looks of awe and terror.

"It grows dark," continued the patient; "but, softly. You know I loved you when you were a child; but now you love another!—ay, that's it—you will not be mine! It grows still darker!—ha, ha, ha!—fly—fly!—it is done! O God! if I could draw back!"

The dying man waxed wilder in his ravings. After a time, however, he became comparatively calm; and, on Mr. Manners addressing him, recognised his voice.

"Ah, that voice!" he said. "I have often heard it. I have not attended to its counsel; but if it could console—oh, no, I cannot be consoled. Your hand, sir!—forgive—forgive."

"Do not ask forgiveness of me," said Mr. Manners. "May God in his mercy pardon you!"

The wretched youth muttered a kind of incoherent prayer, while his mother dropped on her knees by the bed-side. All afterwards was wildness and despair, only relieved by intervals of exhaustion. Mr. Manners continued to administer such consolation as the circumstances of the case admitted of, and did not leave the house till the voice of the guilty man had become hushed in death, and nothing broke the silence but the moanings of the afflicted mother.

Several days had now passed since Jones visited the manse; and he could hold out no longer. On the very day on which Mr. Manners was engaged in the melancholy duty we have described, the unhappy lover bent his steps thither, with an anxious and fluttering heart. As he walked up the garden, he observed Miss Manners watering a small bed, in which she had planted some favourite flowers. The young lady was a good deal embarrassed on beholding him. Her father's injunctions against receiving his visits had made a deep impression on her mind, and she had directed the servant, the next time he called, to say that she could not be seen. Now, however, there was no escape. Jones walked towards her with a smile of mingled fear and admiration; and, if not with cordiality, she received him at least with politeness. Their conversation, as they strolled through the garden, was at first embarrassed, but became more free by degrees, and assumed

at length an almost confidential tone. To a person of a romantic disposition, Jones' conversation was in a high degree fascinating; and his companion in this delightful walk did not conceal the pleasure with which she listened to it. His candour and unreserve she admired; his misfortunes she commiserated; and, with much that he said, she could not fail to be both interested and flattered. Nevertheless, she avoided any word by which she thought she might give encouragement to his hopes; while he, on the other hand, although freely expressing his passion, was careful to avoid a syllable which might lead her to believe that, in his present disgrace and poverty, he presumed to the honour of her hand. After wandering about for some time, their souls melting into each other, Miss Manners could not resist inviting him into the house to rest. Scarcely, however, had they seated themselves in the parlour, than Mr. Manners appeared. He entered with rather a hasty step, and his manner was a good deal agitated. On perceiving Jones, he bowed to him, then turning to his daughter—

"My child!" he said.

"What is it?" inquired Miss Manners, in a tone of alarm.

"Have you," he continued, "forgotten my injunctions?"

Miss Manners cast her eyes on the ground, and seemed displeased at being taken to task before a stranger.

Jones, observing her embarrassment, said—

"Sir, I shall be sorry if my presence here should occasion you any uneasiness. Believe me, I am the last person in the world to intrude where I am not welcome. It will, no doubt, cost me a pang, sir; but if it be your wish that I should not see your daughter more, I shall try to tear my heart from her—I shall go and hide myself in obscurity, and endeavour to forget all I have most loved in this world!"

Mr. Manners raised his hand, as if commanding silence, and gazed stedfastly on his daughter. The latter looked up to him with tears in her eyes, and exclaimed—

"I think Mr. Jones is innocent!"

"He *is* innocent," said the old man, emphatically. "Come to my arms, both!"

Both moved forward and took the hand he offered, but with amazement depicted on their countenances.

"Oh, my children!" he said, "I have witnessed such a scene!"

The old man sat down on the sofa, and, for a few moments, covered his eyes with his hands.

"I have been," he, at length, proceeded, "by the dying bed of the poor village maiden's murderer—I have heard the fearful confession from his own lips. O God! may I never behold such another deathbed!"

Jones dropped on his knee, and Miss Manners clasped her hands as in mute prayer.

"Thank God!" at length exclaimed the latter; "the innocent will no longer suffer for the guilty!"

"No!" said the old man. "Mr. Jones, you have been deeply wronged."

"Ay," said Jones; "but not by you. From you only have I received kindness—kindness often better deserved, but never more needed—often, perhaps, bestowed, but never received with deeper gratitude. While every door was barred against me, yours was open—while every heart"——

His utterance became choked, and he was altogether unable to proceed. Mr. Manners shook him warmly by the hand; and, with many expressions of thankfulness, Jones withdrew, leaving Miss Manners in tears.

On returning homewards, it was obvious that the news of Merrideth's death, together with its fearful revelations, had spread like wildfire through the village. How dif-

ferent was Jones' reception!—nods, recognitions, congratulations, cheers, wherever he passed! Of these, however, he thought not: he thought only of the girl he had left behind him weeping. That very night he again repaired to the manse. He went often; and every succeeding time seemed to be made more welcome.

A pleasant—a delightful change had now taken place in his feelings. The consciousness of having outlived the slander which had so long sullied his name, filled his bosom with a sensation of honest pride, and inspired him with a degree of ease and confidence which he had not previously experienced. Miss Manners was scarcely less gratified by the mystery having been at length cleared up, and the public mind disabused. From her first interview with Jones, she had entertained a strong impression of his innocence; and the fact of her good opinion of him being confirmed, she regarded with feelings almost of triumph. Accordingly, their meetings were mutually delightful. If, at any time, the latter doubted the propriety of encouraging his visits, the reflection that she had done right, in the first instance, in following the dictates of her heart, caused her to continue in the same course. The truth is, she pitied Jones; and pity, it is well known, is akin to a still tenderer emotion.

Two or three weeks after the scene we have described, there was a small evening party at the manse. It was given in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Green, who had just been a few days married. The young couple were ushered into the drawing-room in gay attire, and with their faces wreathed into still gayer smiles; and, in the fair bride, Jones, who was, of course, present, recognized the lady who had, on one occasion, betrayed so much alarm on his doing her a trifling act of kindness. The affair, in the absence of more important topic of conversation, was talked and laughed over; and the bride acknowledged

herself to have been a very silly girl. All the company were soon in high spirits, and the merriment was kept up till it was near midnight. On separating, the company could not help expressing their admiration of the serenity of the night. It was a clear, lovely moonlight; and the exquisite stillness and beauty of the scene caused some of the younger individuals of the party to regret that they had spent so much time within doors. When they reached the gate, Miss Manners, who had accompanied them through the garden, bade them "good night." "Good night," said they, and parted; but Jones, who was the last to shake hands with her, could not part. He lingered, pressed her hand, wished her "good night," and still lingered.

"I must escort you a little way back," he at length said; and, accordingly, the two strolled up the garden, hand in hand—she speaking of the lateness of the hour, and he of the loveliness of the moon and stars, until night, moon, and stars, were all forgotten.

After a few moments' silence, Jones suddenly paused, and, pressing her hand in both of his, said—

"Marion, I would we might never part. I never leave you without pain."

"I know not why it should be so," she said; "but you must just come back the oftener."

"Ay," said he; "but even to be absent from you a little while, is torture."

"I fear," she said, "you are but a poor philosopher."

"Ah," he replied, "philosophy can do many things, but it cannot cure the heartache. O Marion! I love to call you by that name! It is in your power to end all my anxieties: a word—a word will do it! How say you? May I hope? Nay, I do hope; but, may I call you by that name?"

"What name?" interrupted Miss Manners, tremulously.

"That name, dear heart, which is the tenderest man can bestow on woman?"

Her reply was inaudible. Jones, however, kissed her lips, and she forbade him not. On parting, he again kissed her, and returned to his lodgings with feelings of unmixed ecstacy.

A few weeks passed—they were weeks of delicious expectancy, of unrestrained intercourse, of active preparation; and the event which was to crown their happiness was duly solemnized. It was a day of great rejoicing in the village; and, as they dashed off on their marriage jaunt, they were honoured with the blessings and cheers of a large crowd of people who had assembled to wish them joy. On returning, a few days afterwards, similar demonstrations of respect awaited them; and they continued to live in the neighbourhood, greatly esteemed and beloved by all who knew them—esteemed for their many virtues, and beloved for their simple and unostentatious manners.

One little incident, which happened many years afterwards, is perhaps worth relating. An old man, who had been long unable to work, and to whom Jones had shown much kindness, grasped him one day by the hand, and said—

"Sir, I once struck you on the head with a stone; do you forgive me?"

"I do," was the reply; "but you must not do so again."

THE SERGEANT'S TALES.

THE PALANTINES.*

Of all the countless numbers that take their pleasure walks upon the Calton Hill of Edinburgh, none that do not remember it an isolated spot, of awkward access, can have any recollection of Sergeant Square's tall and gaunt figure, his cue, cocked hat, gaiters, and military appearance, as he took his daily promenade around the airy and delightful walks, or sat upon its highest point, where Nelson's Monument now stands, in stately solitude, as if he had been the genius of the hill, resting his square and bony chin on the top of his gold-headed cane, with his immense hands serving as a cushion between. Thus would he sit for hours, gazing on the busy scene beneath, as if he knew what occupied the bustling crowds, and directed their labours according to the impulse of his will. We had passed and repassed each other in our walks for weeks, before any approach to recognition took place between us. I was the first to make an advance, by giving him a slight bow, as we passed; this he returned, and an acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy. Under his stiff and formal air, I found one of the most kind and communicative hearts I ever communed with. It is long since I laid his head in the grave; and I never visit the hill, but memory con-

* Palantine—a name given by the Americans and seamen, to kidnapped individuals, or those who went out voluntarily to be indented, for a time agreed upon, with any person in America willing to pay the sum of money required by the captain for their passage out. The famous Williamson, who first invented the penny-post and directories, obtained damages from the magistrates of Aberdeen for suppressing his narrative in which he exposed them for this traffic.—Ed.

jures up his remarkable figure, as vividly as if we stood face to face, till I almost think I may meet him at each turn, while I saunter along, lost in musing on days that are gone. I may meet with new piles of stone and mortar profaning the sacred spot; but, Sergeant Square I shall never meet there again! But to proceed. It was on that day the 42d regiment marched into Edinburgh, after their return from Egypt, that we were enjoying our usual walk. It was a spirit-stirring time, and our talk was of war, and the gallant exploits of our countrymen. His eye flashed; his gold-headed cane rested on his shoulder as if it had been a musket; his walk became a march; he was evidently thinking of the battles he had been in; when, embracing the opportunity, I requested a short account of his adventures. It was some time before he took any notice of my request, so completely was his mind absorbed in his own recollections. We had reached the north-east angle of the hill before he spoke. At length he seated himself on the smooth green turf—I by his side; and, after a pause—

"If you have the patience to listen to me," he said, "I do not care if I do give you some account of what I have seen, suffered, and enjoyed in this strange world."

"It is of small importance," he began, "where a man was born, or who was his father—his own actions must bring him fame or shame. The first sounds that ever attracted my particular attention, were those of the music bells of old St. Giles', and the firing of the guns in Edinburgh Castle. I had reached my twelfth year, when my father, who was a Jacobite, joined the Highland army at Duddingstone, while Prince Charles was in Holyrood House, and I never saw him again. My mother, who was weakly at the time, and our circumstances very poor—for my father was only a day-labourer—took it so much to heart that she survived only a few months, and I was thrown destitute upon my own resources, which, God

knows, were scant enough. I was tall and stout for my age, and roughed it out, ragged, hungry, and cold, about the city, for three years and some months—running messages, or doing any little thing I could get to do for a piece of bread or a mouthful of victuals; and choosing the warmest stair, or any other convenient place, for a bedroom. Rough as this training was, I was far from being unhappy; for I had my enjoyments, humble as they were—as yet innocent, and as keenly relished as if they had been those of luxury. These few years of hardships were soon to be of eminent service to me—perhaps the means of saving my life.

It was the spring of the year. The winter had been very severe, and I was rejoicing in the thought of summer, which, for the poor, has fewer wants and less of suffering. Loitering, as usual, upon the High Street, hungry enough, and looking for some little job to earn a breakfast, I was accosted by a rough-looking man, rather genteelly dressed, who inquired if I would carry a parcel for him to Leith, and he would give me a sixpence. My heart bounding with joy at the rich reward, I said I would. Whereupon he inquired if my parents would not be angry at my going, or my master, if I had one. I told him I had neither parent nor master, not even a friend in the world to find fault with me how I spent my time. A grim smile of satisfaction came over his countenance; he put the offered sixpence again into his pocket, and gave me a small paper parcel, with the direction where I was to carry it; adding, as I stood waiting for my reward—'Run quick, like a good boy. Tell them to give you some breakfast, and wait until I come and give you the sixpence.' Away I ran, like a greyhound from the slip, to get a breakfast and earn my sixpence. Swift as was my flight, never did the Canongate or the Easter Road—the only one to Leith from Edinburgh at this time—appear so long to me. When I

arrived at the house to which I had been directed, in one of the dark alleys near the shore, I was ushered into a small, darkened room. A stout, thick-set man, in a seaman's dress, heard my message, received my parcel, without once opening his lips, and locked the door.

Hungry, disappointed, and alarmed at this unlooked-for reception, I stood for some time lost in amazement. At length I looked around; there was no furniture in the room, not even so much as a seat of any kind. My fears became excessive. I screamed to be set at liberty, and beat upon the door with my hands and feet, until I sank upon the floor from fatigue, and burst out into a fit of weeping. No answer was made, nor any notice taken of my efforts. I looked through my tears at the window; but it was high, small, and strongly secured with iron stanchels. I had lain thus on the floor for an hour or two, when I heard the key turn in the lock. I sprung to my feet as the door opened; and the same person entered, bearing a pewter tankard of beer, some bread, and salt beef. A thick stick under his arm caught my eye, and excited new terrors. He set the victuals upon the floor, and then, brandishing the bludgeon over my head, threatened to beat my brains out if I made such a noise again—giving, in pure cruelty and wantonness of power, a few blows across the shoulders, to teach me, as he said, what I might expect if I did not attend to his orders. Pointing to the food, he surlily ordered me to eat, and immediately again locked the door. Hungry as I had been a short time before, my heart was too full for me to eat; and the blows I had received pained me very much. I sat down and wept more bitterly than I had done; but the hunger of a boy is keener than his grief—so I at length made a hearty meal, moistened by my tears, and wept myself asleep.

How long I had lain thus I had no means of ascertain-

ing. I was roused by the voice of mirth and singing in another apartment. All was dark; so much so, I could not even distinguish the small grated window from the dead walls. I listened for some time in surprise, and would fain have persuaded myself I had been in an unpleasant dream; but my shoulders were still sore, and the small basket and tankard, I felt, were still at my side. For some time I revolved in my mind what step to take—whether to remain quiet, or knock upon the door, and implore my liberty—at least to be made acquainted with the cause of my being detained. At length my suspense became so unbearable that I resolved to brave every danger, and began to knock at the door, for which I had groped, tapping gently at first, and gradually knocking louder and louder. The voice of my jailor, evidently in extreme anger, again sounded fearfully through the key-hole—'Be quiet, or I will come in and beat your noisy body to a mummy.' I shrunk from the door, and leaned upon the wall, as far from him as the small dimensions of the room would admit, trembling, in fearful expectation of his entrance. While I stood thus, a prey to the keenest anguish, the mirth and jollity for a time increased, and at length grew fainter and fainter, until it ceased. All was still for a little; then I heard the noise of footsteps approaching the door of my prison-room, and a sound as if something was in the act of being dragged along the passage. The key was placed in the door, and it opened. My heart beat as if it would have burst my bosom, when I saw the ruffian who had locked me up, and another like himself, dragging what appeared to me to be the dead body of a man. I uttered a suppressed scream, and must have fallen to the ground, had I not been pent up in the corner. My eyes were as if they would have started from their sockets, and I could not withdraw them from the horrid sight. One of the men held a lanthorn in his left hand, which threw a

feeble light upon the group; while, with his right hand, he grasped the left arm of the body; and, his companion exerting all his strength, they dragged it to the side of the room, and dropped it upon the floor. A stifled groan issued from it, which thrilled through my ears like an order for my execution; and I would have darted from the spot, wild with despair, although I saw the eyes of both watching me, as they deposited the body, with a malignant grin of satisfaction; but my limbs refused to obey my will, and I stood the image of despair. The men spoke not a word, but, retiring, locked the door upon me, and left me with a thing my nature revolted from. Scarce were they gone when similar sounds fell upon my ear, and they again entered with a second victim. This was more than I could endure: a wild energy came over me; I sank upon my knees, and implored them not to murder me, or leave me alone with the bodies, for mercy's sake! I sank upon the floor, and grasped their legs in the fervency of my supplications. With a fiendish laugh, they spurned me from them; and, as they locked the door, growled—

'What does the fool mean?—beware, the cudgel!'

As the sound of the closing and locking of the door died away, I was roused from my stupor of fear to an agony of terror, that drove me almost to madness. A movement in one of the bodies, accompanied by deep guttural sounds, indicated that the objects of my terror were coming to life again, or were not yet quite dead. This produced new terrors, and I dashed myself upon the door, uttering the most piercing cries. The ruffians again entered, and beat me without mercy; but I was now beyond the fear of personal suffering; and I really believe, so intense was my feeling of fear and horror, that I would have leaped into a furnace to avoid or free myself from my situation. Their threats and blows were vain. I reiterated my cries more intensely; for I saw both the bodies become apparently

animated, and turn their dull, stupid gaze on me, as I struggled to wrench myself from the grasp of the ruffians. Our struggle was short; for one of them set down the lanthorn, forced down my arms behind me, and held me fast, while the other dropped the cudgel with which he had been beating me, and, taking a piece of rope-yarn from his jacket pocket, bound my wrists behind my back; he then deliberately took the large key out of the lock of the door, placed it in my mouth, across between my teeth, tied it firm behind my head, and so effectively gagged me, that I could not utter a sound. How I retained my reason at this fearful period I know not, for I expected death every moment; and there was a misty vagueness about my fate that had even greater terror than death itself. As soon as I was thus silenced, they stood grinning at my agony for a minute before either spoke. At length—

'This is a troublesome customer enough, for noise part, said the first ruffian to the other; 'but he will now be quiet enough, I think. I wish the boat were come, or we shall have plenty on our hands soon, when these two have slept it off. It is full tide now, and they were to have been here an hour ere flow. What can detain the lubbers, think you?'

'Can't say,' replied the other; 'perhaps something is in their way. There they are.'

At this moment a low whistle sounded faintly into the room, as if coming from under the window. One of the men answered by a similar whistle, and both left the room; and in a few minutes four sailors entered, and, taking up one of the objects of my dread, carried it out. One of the ruffians then assisted me to rise, and, holding me by the collar, dragged me out of the house after them, down to the Ferry-boat Stairs at the quay, more dead than alive. The four seamen had placed their burden in a boat that lay there. I was placed beside it. It lay inanimate; and I,

seated on one of the thwarts, was guarded by two seamen, who kept watch, while the four were away for the other victim. At length they came, deposited their burden beside the other, pushed off from the pier, and rowed out of the harbour's mouth. As they pulled along, I felt my spirits revive, the fear of immediate death passed from my mind; and, besides, I was in company with living beings like myself, however cruel they might be. Before we reached the beacon, the ruffian who had first locked me up, and who was now in the boat with us, loosened the key from my mouth, and undid the cord from my hands, which had begun to swell, from the tight manner in which they were tied. This act almost relieved me of my fears; still all was silence in the boat, not a word had as yet been spoken by any one; but afterwards, as we gained distance from the shore, they began to converse.

'So the Betsy sails to-morrow, without fail,' said the first ruffian.

'She does,' was the answer of the seaman.

'Why has her stay been so short this trip?' again asked the man. 'We will make but a poor job of it. We have only nabbed five.'

'Why, I think you have done pretty well,' answered the sailor; 'twenty-five pounds for two days' work is good pay. Old Satan, you are never content.'

'None of your slack, mate,' rejoined the other; 'I won't stand it. Two days more would have made it fifty or better; and no man, more than I, would be content with one half of what he might and ought to have.'

'I believe we are full, old Grumbler,' said the tar; 'others are more active than you; but here, we are just alongside of the Betsy. Ship, ahoy! Throw us a rope! Are you all asleep?'

In a few minutes, a rope was thrown; it was made fast by the fore thwarts, when the ruffians and mate went on

board, and remained for some time. At length the mate returned, and, holding the end of the rope from the vessel, ordered me to ascend, which I did with difficulty. My two companions were then hoisted on board, being fastened to a rope, and dragged up by the crew of the vessel. As soon as they were on deck, the ruffians descended into a boat without speaking a word, and put off for the harbour.

When it was gone, I was conducted to the hold of the vessel; and the two companions of my adventure were carried, and placed beside me. My terror of them had now entirely fled; for, from their contortions and half-muttered expressions, I had perceived they were not dead, but in a beastly state of intoxication. Even to be from under the same roof with the cause of my sufferings was to me a change much for the better. With a mind comparatively at ease, I fell asleep upon the hard deck, where I had at first taken my station, and remained in happy unconsciousness until I was awoke after sunrise, in consequence of the bustle and noise around me. For a few minutes I revolved the events of the preceding day and night in my mind, and shuddered as the recollection dawned upon me. Raising myself upon my elbow, I gazed around as well as the obscurity would permit (for the main hatch was closed), and saw the two young men who had caused me so much alarm, lying close beside me, in a profound sleep, and breathing very heavily. I attempted to rise; but felt so sick and giddy that I could not keep my feet, from the motion of the vessel. I longed for the presence of some of the crew; but none of them came near us. The two lads at length awoke from their sleep, bewildered and sick almost to death; they gazed around them with a vacant stare, as if they had just passed into a new state of existence. They spoke not a word; their minds were occupied in examining all around them, and, as I thought, ascer-

taining their own identity. Young as I was, had I been at ease, I could have enjoyed the extraordinary scene before me; but, alas! I was a partaker of all the feelings that were passing in their minds. At length they broke silence—

'Willie, Willie, what's come owre us now?' cried Peter.

'Indeed I do not know, Peter,' replied he; 'but I fear it is no good.'

'What good can be expected from such company as we were in last night?' continued the first, 'and such drinking as we had. O Willie, had you come away when I wanted —but I am as bad as you, or I would have left you when I threatened.'

'There is no use to reflect upon what is done, when it cannot be undone,' said his friend. 'I fear the deceitful scoundrels drugged our liquor; for I have no recollection of anything that occurred after your proposing to leave them.'

Then, addressing me, he asked if I knew where they were, or in what ship. I answered that I did not, further than that, from what I had seen and heard, I thought we were on board of a vessel they called the Betsy; and then gave them an account of all I had witnessed the evening before. The younger of the two began to weep like a child; while the other, whose rage knew no bounds, swore fearfully at the two ruffians who had betrayed them into their present situation. When he became more calm, I requested him to explain himself; and learned from him his own history and that of his companion. They were schoolfellows, cousins, and fellow-apprentices; had served their time as joiners; and then left their native village, to pursue their calling in the capital, with some views, though not matured, of emigrating to America. Having been unsuccessful in obtaining work in the city, they had come down to Leith to make inquiries about a passage to

America; and were so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of one of the notorious plantation-crimps, who, pretending to be intimate with the captain of a trading vessel about to sail, enticed them to his den, that they might obtain all the information they required. They were plied with liquor; robbed of all the money they had; and placed in the situation in which I now saw them. From the inquiries they had made in Leith, and our mutual explanations, it was too evident to us all three that we had been kidnapped and sold to a palantine vessel, to be carried out to Virginia, and there sold as slaves, to the highest bidder. The young men were inconsolable; as for me, I cared little about it, now that I was assured there was no immediate personal violence to be feared: hard fare and hard living were my lot—I knew no other. While others, bred to better things, were in misery, I was comparatively in happiness. Such is the influence of habit. To have my provisions regularly served, with nothing to do but lie upon the floor of the hold, or walk about in its narrow limits, was to me sufficient recompense for an evil, which to others would have appeared irremediable.

The next tide after we were put on board, the Betsy left Leith Roads, and sailed for Aberdeen, on her progress north. Our number was there augmented to eighteen—the recruits being all boys about my own age, who, not being kidnapped, but trepanned with false promises, came on board in great spirits, and full of hope. I could notice the various operations going forward, in consequence of my cheerful and contented manner having obtained for me permission to come on deck and range over the vessel. My slight sickness went off as soon as we were under way; and, pleased with my new mode of life, I began to make myself as useful to the crew as I could; but the two lads were not so fortunate; for they were continually abusing the captain, or importuning him to put them on shore.

In the forenoon of the day before we sailed from Aberdeen, a boat, containing a quantity of luggage, came alongside, and a genteelly-dressed couple came on board, and were ushered into the cabin. The female appeared very dejected; and, hanging upon the male with anxious fondness, expressed through her silent tears, bent her gaze, alternately looking towards the shore with an expression of regret, and then in his face with a languid smile. He was as well-made and good-looking a man as I have ever seen in all my wanderings; but there was a marble-like rigidity in his features, only enlivened by a peculiar cast of his piercing black eyes, that created a peculiar feeling of uneasiness in me as I looked at him. He left the vessel; but when I know not; for we sailed before sunset; and I never again saw the female he left until we had passed Cape Wrath, some few days after. As for myself, I was quite happy, and felt myself more at home than I had done since my mother's death. The ship was a home to me. I had my allowance with the other palantines; slept in the hold with them at night; and enjoyed, along with many of them, the pleasure of building castles in the air—anticipations of the wealth and comforts we were to enjoy in the land of promise. It was, indeed, by delusive accounts of America, that most of them had been induced to embark.

We were now careering over the blue waves of the vast Atlantic, as if we were far above the earth. Nothing was there for the weary eye to rest upon but a deary expanse of ocean and sky. All was still as death, save the hissing at the bows of the vessel, as she parted the unfathomable deep. The crew loitered upon the decks listlessly; and we, as palantines, huddled together around the mainmast, were whiling away the time in songs, or talking of the homes we had left behind, and future hopes in a foreign land. We were suddenly interrupted by the female I have already mentioned, who came rushing up the companion,

from the cabin, and crouched amongst us like a frightened hare. I could not have believed that so short a period of time could have wrought so great a change upon a human being. She was thin, pale; her eyes red, and sunk in her head; her hair dishevelled; and her whole appearance exhibiting the extreme of neglect. We all looked upon her in astonishment; for, indeed, we were not aware that there was a female on board. Her sobs and distracted looks moved our young hearts almost to tears. She spoke nothing; fear had chained up her tongue; her eyes were either bent imploringly upon us, or turned, in aversion and terror, towards the quarter from whence she had come. All on deck was dumb show; the sailors looked on, apparently as much surprised as we were; and, in the midst of the silent scene, the captain came on deck, apparently in great agitation. He was coming towards us, when the female sank on her knees, and, raising her clasped hands, called on God to save her from that bad man; then, looking around to us, implored us, in the most thrilling accents, not to deliver her up to him. We were ourselves slaves; yet, such is the force of a woman's appeal, that we placed ourselves between her and him, while the crew stood apart, and looked silently on. The captain affected to laugh.

'Lady, what are you afraid of, that you have left the cabin?' he said. 'It was all in jest, upon my honour! You are as safe there as in your father's house. Come, madam, I shall have the pleasure to lead you back.'

'Oh, never!' screamed the female. 'Leave me! leave me! if you would not drive me mad, or into this boundless ocean. What on earth have I now to care for? I know I am your slave, by the basest and cruellest means, but worse I shall never be. A favour from your hands would be hateful to me. With these, my fellow-sufferers, I can alone feel myself secure from insult. Your cabin I

shall never enter. Foolish—oh, how foolishly confiding I have been!—but criminal I shall never be. So, leave me, for mercy sake!'

While she spoke, my eyes were fixed upon him. I saw the working of passion deeply depicted on his countenance; pity had no place there. A faint shade of shame passed over him; but disappointment settled into fierce rage. Stamping upon the deck, and in a voice hoarse from emotion—

'It is well, madam,' he cried. 'You have made your choice, and shall abide by it; and those who, by their looks, indicate their resolution to abet your folly, shall not fare the better for their interference. Mate, call the crew! force the palantines below; and batten them down, as base mutineers.'

Not one of us had as yet spoken one word; the whole was the affair of a few minutes. The mate ordered us below; and we were obeying the order as fast as we could—the distressed female huddling in the midst of us, fearful to be on the deck alone—when William, in his undaunted manner, stepped up to the captain, and began to upbraid him, both for his conduct in having kidnapped us, and for his present conduct towards an unprotected female. He even threatened him with exposure as soon as we reached the shores of America. Peter, his friend, in vain urged him to refrain from irritating the captain; but the hot-headed youth heeded not the advice, and stood by his point, till the captain, who uttered not one word, bit his lip, and, hurrying to his cabin, returned with a cocked pistol in each hand. The mate, who was a good-hearted kind of lad, was, at the moment, persuading William to go below quietly; but his blood was up; and, even at sight of the pistols, he quailed not. I looked on with fear, for the captain's stern silence looked ominous. He levelled one of the pistols, and fired, the ball passed close

by his intended victim, and went right through the fore-sail. The second he was in the act of raising, when William struck his hand down, and it went off, sending the ball through the deck. The furious man now called to the mate and crew to place poor William in irons. The youth stood still resolute, and would have rushed upon the cap-tain and hurled him to the deck, or perhaps overboard (for he was a powerful lad), had not Peter held him back. The irons were now produced from the cabin—William and the captain eyeing each other meanwhile like two tigers; and three of the crew and the mate, set on by the captain, who kept blaspheming in a fearful manner, rushed to secure the young man. Peter at once loosed his hold of William, and stood in his defence; whereupon the cap-tain, starting to give personal aid, uttered a shrill cry of pain, and fell upon the deck, which was stained with his blood. The ball had passed through his foot before it entered the wood. As many of us as the hatchway would admit, witnessed the scene; but none of us had any mind to be partakers in it. William and Peter were secured and put in irons before the vindictive villain would allow himself to be removed from the deck. It was no matter, in his anger, that his foot bled. He even stood, while the deck was streaming, till we were also battened down into the dark hold—the two companions remaining in irons above. As soon as we were all settled below, in which there was not even proper accommodation for us poor palantines, the female retired to one corner; and, seating herself on the bare boards, leaned her head to the side of the vessel, and wept bitterly. We were deeply affected by her situation and distress; but had nothing in our power whereby to alleviate her sorrow, save, indeed, our sympathy; and that we only gave in secret; for her ladylike appearance, in a great measure, overawed us, and made us retire from her. The greater part of us composed ourselves to sleep. Before

morning, it blew a dreadful gale, as we could perceive by the pitching of the vessel and the noise of the rigging, which sounded fearfully in our ears. All of us became very sick. The poor lady I thought would have died; her weakness was extreme; and her suffering apparently beyond any present remeid. Two days and nights we remained in this dreadful situation, without a mouthful of food or a drop of water. Our sufferings increased hourly, and were almost more than we could endure. We shouted for help, or to be liberated from our noisome prison. Our cries were either unheeded or drowned by the noise and tumult of the storm. I and a few more had recovered from the sickness only to feel, in greater horror, our painful situation. The heat of the hold was intense, and aggravated our thirst tenfold. The air even became offensive; our breathing a kind of painful spasm of the windpipe. We crept to the foot of the ladder under the main hatch; and, holding by it, sucked in some fresh air. I had been here for some time, and felt my sufferings alleviated; and the poor female's situation in the distant corner, selfish as we had all become, moved us so much to pity, that two of us agreed to relinquish our envied post, to ascertain whether she still survived.

We found her extended upon the hard boards, to all appearance dead; I placed my hand upon her heart, to ascertain if life was extinct. She opened her eyes, and made a motion with her hand as if she wished me to retire. Humanity forbade compliance; and, in the best manner we could, we conveyed her to the foot of the ladder, where she gradually began to recover and breathe more freely. This was now the third day of our confinement. The storm had almost subsided, as we could feel from the vessel lying more steady in the water; and, to our unspeakable joy, the hatch was opened, and a supply of water and biscuit given to us. Next to the water, the pure air of heaven was

most welcome to us. I wet the parched lips of the pale sufferer, then held the beverage to them. She swallowed a few mouthfuls, blessed me for my kindness, then sank into her usual melancholy. We were now told by the mate that we were not to come on deck; but he would leave the hatch open. We obeyed this command, which came from the captain. William and Peter, who had witnessed and endured the whole storm, in irons, lashed at the foot of the mainmast to a ring bolt, were also liberated, and came down amongst us. We learned from them that we had been in great danger, and that the mate and crew had been alarmed for the safety of the vessel. The captain was still unable to leave his cabin; and, from all accounts, he was very bad of the wound. This was so far fortunate; for the mate, who was of a humane disposition, brought some coffee for the female, which William, with great difficulty, prevailed upon her to take. She gradually began to recover; and the more passionate bursts of her grief having subsided, we were anxious to learn how she had been reduced to her present situation, and thought of making a delicate inquiry into her history. At length the frank and generous William put the question to her in the most gentle manner; a burst of tears followed the request.

'Much as it will pain me,' she said, 'I am so indebted to you all for your kindness and humanity, that I cannot refuse your desire. I almost feel it a duty to myself; for appearances are strongly against me. So low as I must appear at present to you all, I was born in affluence, though not of an ancient family. My father was a wealthy merchant, and the best of parents. My sainted mother died before I had reached my tenth year, leaving us both inconsolable for her loss. My father, who could scarce endure to have me out of his sight—for I was an only child—engaged a governess to complete my education. She was

a young woman of engaging manners, and possessed of every accomplishment; yet under these she concealed a selfish disposition and hardness of heart, which neither my father nor myself suspected could have existed in one so young and bland in her speech. To me she was most kind and unremitting in her duties—more, indeed, like a mother than a hireling; and I loved her as if she had stood in that relation to me. This won my father's esteem for her, which, unfortunately, soon ripened into love. One day, I recollect, as I was walking in the garden, accompanied by him, he led me to an arbour, and, placing me beside him, said—

'Eliza, do you love Marian?'

I artlessly threw my arms around his neck, and exclaiming—

'Oh, yes, papa; how much I thank you for getting me so good a governess!'

I had pleased him; for he smiled and said—

'My dear Eliza, I mean to bind her to you by a stronger tie. I have watched her maternal care and affection for you, and mean to give her the right to call you daughter.'

I was delighted. The marriage was solemnised, and we lived in harmony and mutual love, so far as I could perceive, for six years. At this period my father fell into a bad state of health, which threatened to terminate fatally. Our attentions to him, unremitting and anxious, were repaid by a gratitude and love which seemed equally divided between his young wife and the child of his first love. Marian showed no jealousy; and my heart was incapable of any feelings but those of affection. Meanwhile, my dear parent, to prepare for the worst, settled his affairs. We were both in the room with him along with the lawyer. He was dissolved in tears, and asked us if we were satisfied with the manner in which he dictated the disposal of his wealth. I could only answer by my sobs. My grief was

excessive. The making of a will, to my young and inexperienced mind, had all the appearance of the last act of a living person. Death soon closed the scene. By the settlement, it was provided that we were to be treated as sisters, only a greater share of power (as if she had been the elder sister) was given to his wife. It ran thus:—If neither married, we were to live together, and the survivor was to enjoy and have the disposal of all. If Marian married, she was, during her life, to enjoy one-half, which was to revert to me or my children at her death. If I married during her life, without her consent. I was to be cut off from any part of my father's property, except what she might choose to give me. This was a hard condition. I was to have no claim at law; and, in the event of me or my husband instituting an action, I was to be cut off with a shilling. This fatal clause, which I heard read to me at the time with indifference, has been the cause of all my misfortunes, and since then I have had every reason to believe my confiding father was prompted to insert it, at the suggestion of my artful stepmother. For some time, she had, at every opportunity, been speaking of foolish marriages made by young women, and their fatal consequences, illustrating them by numerous anecdotes and examples, whereby she invidiously prepared him for her selfish purpose, and at last compassed her object without the appearance of a dictation which he would have spurned. I was thus left at the mercy of this designing woman, who, when she put on her widow's robes, put off her hypocrisy towards me, and began to appear in her true colours. Alas! I have every reason to think that her acting had all along been irksome to her. She became harsh and cruel, doing all she could to make the house and her presence disagreeable to me. She became gay, and frequented company, of which I was forced to partake; and when I could scarce refrain from tears at the remembrance of some cutting

speech she had used to me only a few hours before, I was forced to smile to hide my chagrin. Before strangers, there was no change towards me, neither was there anything I could complain of to my acquaintance; for so artfully did she manage to make me miserable, that every fault was imputable to my own apparent bad temper. It was when alone that I experienced her bitter manner. All was wrong I said or did, and her admonitions for my amendment were more cutting than her reproofs and abuse. I had several eligible offers for my hand; all of which she refused, under one pretence or another—covering her designs against me by the mask of an anxiety for my happiness; so that she was looked upon by all who were acquainted with her as the best of stepmothers—the kindest protector of youth. At length, her wishes were accomplished. A nephew of her own, by her invitation, came to reside with us for a short time, upon a visit. As if my good genius warned me of my fate, I disliked him so much at first, that I felt unhappy in his presence; but his assiduities gradually won upon me. I contrasted him with his aunt; love succeeded to aversion; and I was ruined.'

Here a burst of tears for a time choked her utterance. After some time, she resumed—

'I was now, for a time, happy in the delirium of youthful love. His tender attentions had completely won my heart. With a thrill of pleasure, covered by maiden modesty, I heard his first declaration of unalterable love for me. He saw too plainly the power he had over me. His aunt refused, as usual, her consent to our union; and, after upbraiding me for seducing the affections of her nephew, locked me up in my room, while she retained him in the house. Stolen interviews were the natural consequence. He was all indignation at his aunt for her unkindness to me; and, if possible, more tender and respectful than ever. To escape the tyranny I had so long

suffered, I unfortunately agreed to elope with him, and be privately married. I explained to him the situation in which I was placed, by my father's will—he declared he loved me for myself alone. I was now completely in the toils; gave my consent; on the third night left my late father's house in his company, and set off in a postchaise, which was drawn up at a short distance from the gate. Next forenoon, we were lawfully married—his aunt taking no steps to prevent it by following us, but contenting herself by putting on the appearance of grief for my folly and ingratitude to her, for all the care and attention she had bestowed upon my education, and the base return I had made for all her kindness. Can there be a doubt she was the cause of all? Nay—she was the first to make known to me the prior history of my husband—the man whom she had first introduced to me, and to whom she gave every facility to win my unsuspecting heart. She herself now blushed not to say that he was a reprobate, without principle, addicted to every vice, and one whom his friends had found it out of their power to reclaim. With well-feigned tears of regret, she upbraided herself for having ever allowed him to enter her house—ascribing her motive to humanity, and a desire to reclaim him from his errors; and hinting, when she could, that I had defeated her good intentions, and ruined myself. Alas! how true the latter part has proved to me! I and my husband wrote to her letter after letter, in vain. She refused, in the most insulting manner, to allow me a shilling of my father's fortune. All I obtained was my own personal effects, and a few of the jewels that had belonged to my mother. Poverty came fast upon us, and debts increased. My husband had become unkind, and often absent from me for days—excusing himself by fears for his creditors. In our extremity, he spoke of emigration to America, describing the country in glowing colours, and dwelling on the happy prospects he anticipated

from the assistance of some relations he had there. I offered no objection; for I had now no partiality for one country more than another—where my husband was, there was my heart and home; and, with a severe pang, not for their value, but for the sake of her who now was unconscious of my situation, I parted with the last of my mother's jewels, to defray the expense of our voyage. My own jewels had been long since disposed of, to supply our urgent wants. We left Edinburgh, like guilty creatures, under the cloud of night, for fear of his being arrested, and proceeded to join the vessel at Aberdeen. I can proceed no further, lest my heart should burst. My heartless husband had sold me to the captain, to be disposed of in America—trepanned me north for his wicked purpose. The rest you know.'

Here her tears could no longer be suppressed; nor could we restrain ours; yet no one spoke to interrupt her grief. William alone uttered a few execrations against the aunt and nephew.

The weather continued rough, and the wind contrary, and we suffered much for a few days from the pitching of the vessel. We were still confined to the hold by the captain's orders; yet we had no other cause of complaint, for the mate supplied all our wants in abundance. The captain, who had continued very ill from the wound in his foot, at length fevered, and his life was in danger; at his request, the lady left the hold and waited upon him. He begged forgiveness for the insult he had offered her; we were all allowed the freedom of the vessel; and she continued to nurse and watch over him with all that care and assiduity that belong to women. After a tedious passage of nine weeks, we arrived off Baltimore, in the State of Maryland; the captain, who recovered, being still very lame, though able to come upon deck. As soon as we cast anchor off the mouth of the harbour (for we did not enter),

a message was sent to the town by the captain; and, on the following day, a regular market was held upon our deck, when we were put up to sale, and knocked down by an auctioneer to the highest bidder. William and Peter brought large sums, being expert tradesmen, and their time of service was short, compared with the rest. The others, like myself, were fit only for field work, and our time, to make up the sum of forty pounds, which we averaged, was three years. We all thought the captain would have given the injured lady her liberty, and a present, for her care of him; but avarice was his ruling passion, and stifled gratitude. He had paid her unprincipled husband a large sum for his victim, and was determined to reimburse himself. All the favour he conferred upon her was, that he did not dispose of her with the same regardlessness as to who was the purchaser, but kept her on board several days, while he made inquiries as to an eligible situation. Those who knew him gave him little credit for his endeavours, and did not scruple to say that he was as anxious to drive a good bargain for himself as to find a good master for her. Whatever was his motive, it turned out very fortunate for her, as I heard afterwards; for a rich shipowner of the city, whose wife had died a few months before, satisfied the captain's cupidity, and took her to his house as a governess to his children, three of whom were daughters. Before I left Maryland, I heard that she had learned, through the English papers, which her master regularly got, by one or other of the many vessels that traded to this port, that her unprincipled husband had been condemned and executed for robbing his aunt of a large sum of money, and forging an order upon her banker, not many weeks after we had left Scotland. Many years afterwards, I learned, in Edinburgh, from William, who had returned, after a long stay in Baltimore, with a considerable sum of money, and had commenced builder, that

before he left the city, she had married her master, and was as wealthy and happy as any lady in the province. But what struck me most forcibly was, the just retribution that had taken place in her singular fortunes. Her stepmother was, when he left, actually living an humble dependent upon her bounty, in Baltimore. It appeared that, after she had succeeded in forcing her stepdaughter into the fatal marriage with her nephew, and obtained the object she plotted for—possession of the whole property—she herself fell a victim to a husband nearly as bad—a gambler and adventurer, of a most prepossessing figure and address; the consequence was, that all she possessed was lost by him at play, or squandered in dissipation. Both had been living in London in extreme want, when he was detected in swindling transactions to a considerable amount. Whether guilty or innocent of the fraudulent acts of her husband, there were many suspicious circumstances which she could not explain to the satisfaction of a jury, and both were convicted and banished to the plantations. By good fortune for them, the vessel that brought them out, bound for Norfolk, in Virginia, had suffered much in a storm, put into Baltimore in a leaky state, and there landed the convicts, handing them over to the governor of Maryland. Eliza's husband, who was in the magistracy of the city, got the list of their names when they were transferred from the ship to the prison. Several of them had died on the voyage, from bad fare, confinement, and harsh treatment; mostly all were sickly, more or less; and Marian was very ill. From her manners and appearance, Eliza's husband became interested in her; and, to save her life, had her removed from the hospital in the jail, to his own house. You may form your own conjectures of the astonishment of both when they met. Eliza was the most forgiving and gentle of creatures, as she had shown in her attention to the captain after his bad usage of her; and, at her request, her

husband got from the governor a grant of their services, during the term the law had condemned them to serve. The husband ran from the country a few months after his arrival, and had not been heard of when William came away; but the wife remained under the protection of her she had attempted to ruin.

To return to myself after this long digression, I and other two of the young Aberdeen lads were purchased by a farmer, and removed that afternoon to his home, about twelve miles from Baltimore. A more pitiable figure, as regards dress, never landed on any shore. I had still the same remnant of clothes with which I had left Edinburgh; but now they scarcely held together, and were besmeared with tar; my feet and legs were clean, but shoes or stockings were a luxury I had been long unused to. My long yellow hair hung down my back, but covering I had none for my head. My heart was light and joyous, as was that of my companions. Our three years of bondage, we thought, would soon pass away, and the golden period commence. During our ride over the rough and ill-made road, in a waggon in which our master had brought a load of tobacco to town, our whole conversation was of our future golden prospects; but, alas! we were soon awakened from our pleasant dreams—for, upon our arrival at the farm, which was not until some time after nightfall, we were placed in a dark out-house, and the door barred upon us. Our master was a sour-looking, taciturn man, who had scarcely spoken to us all the way, save to inquire our ages, and what kind of work we could best perform. For some time we stood close by the door, unable to speak from surprise and fear. So dark was the place where we were confined, that we could not see our own hands, even when they touched our faces. After standing thus, melancholy and terrified, the bars were withdrawn, and our master entered with a lanthorn and a basket, in which was abundance of pork

and Indian corn, boiled whole, and still warm, to be eaten as bread. In a surly manner, he ordered us to take our supper quickly, that we might be ready to turn out in the morning to work. Young and hungry, we were not long in dispatching our meal, when, pointing to a quantity of dry grass at one end of our prison (for I can call it by no other name), he lifted his lanthorn, and left us to ruminate upon our melancholy situation and dreary prospects under such a taskmaster. None of us felt inclined to speak; yet it was some time ere any of us could close our eyes, in consequence of the noise made by the bull-frogs in a swamp near the farm. If we had not heard them as we approached the place, and inquired what caused the, to us, strange sounds, we would have been terribly alarmed. Tired nature at length prevailed, and I sank asleep. Before sunrise next morning, the harsh voice of our master, whip in had, roused us from repose. We started up, and followed him into the enclosure in front of his barn and house.

This was an oblong square, enclosed with stout wooden paling, very thickly set, on the banks of a beautiful stream. At one side were the buildings, composed entirely of wood —the forest, which extended as far as the eye could reach, was at no great distance in the rear—everything around indicated the greatest plenty of all that was necessary for the enjoyment of life, as far as food could administer to it; there were several cows and horses, sleek and fat, feeding under a shed; brood sows, with numerous progenies; and fowls actually swarming around. The morning was beautiful; the air, filled with a thousand grateful odours from the fields, imparting to our young minds a buoyancy we had been strangers to since we had left our own native shores. Our hasty survey was made in a few minutes, while we stood waiting further orders. Our master, who had entered another part of the building, returned, accompanied by two of the most miserable-looking men I had

ever seen—as wretchedly clad as I was myself, with the exception that they had broad straw-hats upon their heads. Misery and they seemed to have been long intimates; my heart sank within me at their appearance; both had wooden clogs, consisting of a cut of about a foot long from the branch of a tree, chained to their right leg at the ancle; and this they carried over their arm. In addition, one of them had a stout collar round his neck, from which projected three iron hooks, about a foot from his head. We burst into tears, thinking we were to be similarly equipped, and would have fled, had flight been possible; all the riches in the world we would have counted a mean reward to the person who would have transported us from the tyrant's farm-yard to the beautiful hills and valleys of Scotland. As they came to where we stood gazing through our tears, three tall, bony, sallow-looking lads, sons of the proprietor, issued from the principal building, with implements upon their shoulders, one of which was given to each of us, and we were now to begin our work. Before we proceeded, our master said to us, in his harsh manner—

'Mind ye, lads, you are my bound servants for three years, to do my will—mayhap for more. If you offer to run away, I will catch you again; and, besides punishment, dress you so—and he pointed with malicious triumph to his victims—to prevent your running; and, mark me, for every day you are absent, you serve me two.'

In spite of his threat, I believe there was not one of us who did not resolve to make his escape from him the first opportunity. Had he treated us kindly, we would have obeyed him with pleasure, nor thought of anything but completing our period of service; but humanity was foreign to his nature, and short-sighted avarice alone possessed all his thoughts. He had himself been a convict in his youth; but had for many years been free, and had purchased, when it was yet part of the forest, the lot of land he now cul-

tivated. All had been the creation of his own labour, and he was proud of it to excess. When in good humour, which was seldom the case, his feats against, and escapes from, the Indians, and praises of his lands, were the only things upon which he was loquacious.

We soon learned that our two companions in misery were government convicts, and very bad characters; both had been guilty of many crimes, and were so hardened that nothing but the strictest surveillance and coercion could keep them in subjection. They were like tigers in chains, and threatened the most fearful revenge, as soon as the period of their servitude expired. This they did openly to his face; and not a day passed without an altercation, or without some punishment being inflicted upon them, when they would threaten again until they were tired, and wish that the Indians might give us a hot wakening before morning, and yield them an opportunity of making tobacco pouches of the scalps of the master and his sons.

I often wondered how he kept his temper; he seemed to treat them with scorn—for his cool, calculating mind had so long been familiar with the perils of his situation, that he heeded them not so long as he conceived himself secure. To us three youths, who trembled at his voice, he was not excessively cruel, further than working us almost beyond our strength. From sunrise to sunset, we were allowed no intervals but a few minutes to swallow our food, of which we had abundance and to spare.

'Eat well, work well,' he used to say, 'is American fashion.'

I had been with him about six months, and was literally naked; my skin had become hard and brown as an Indian's; all my clothing consisted of some pieces of sheep skin I had contrived for winter wear, and a straw hat of coarse enough manufacture, which I had plated and made

for myself on the Sabbath-days, to screen me from the intolerable glare and heat of the sun. Our appearance gave us no concern, for we were completely excluded from all intercourse with human beings, except those upon the plantation; and strangers were seldom seen in our neighbourhood. At the time I speak of, our master had been down to Baltimore, with a waggon load of produce, consisting of pork and salted beef, &c. He had made an excellent market, and returned in a fit of good humour; at our return from labour, he called us three into the house, as we were passing to our prison, to be locked up for the night. We were surprised at the invitation, for we had never been within the walls of the dwelling-house. As soon as we entered, he inquired if we would purchase any clothing from him, seeing we were so much in want of them. Scarcely could we believe our ears and eyes, when, opening a box, he displayed canvas jackets, trousers, and check shirts.

'You surely mean to make sport with us,' said I; for you know well that we have not one farthing among us three to purchase the smallest necessary.'

'That, I guess, is not of much matter,' he replied, in his quiet, husky manner, 'if I choose to give you a long credit.'

We at once agreed to his own terms, and I signed a bond for one hundred dollars, for a pair of coarse canvas trousers, a jacket of the same, two check shirts, and a good straw hat. My heart misgave me when I saw his peculiar smile, as he placed my bond in his pocket-book. Pleased as I was with my finery, I feared I had done wrong, but did not know to what extent until next morning, when we joined the convicts at labour. As soon as they saw us in our new dresses, they burst out into a loud laugh.

'Oh!' said they, 'has the old villain limed his birds already? Poor greenhorns, you have sold yourselves for

years to come. How are you to redeem the debts you have incurred, and others you must yet incur, but by new engagements? He has you in his toils." And they again laughed aloud.

We resumed our labour with heavy hearts; despondency came upon us, and we began to droop and pine. At night, when we retired to rest, and, until overpowered by fatigue and sleep, we talked of nothing but plans of escape. Numbers were formed and abandoned; to fly to the forests, we must perish through hunger and fatigue, or wander on, unknowing where to go; in the direction of the coast, was still more impracticable, for all the planters were in league with each other, to prevent the escape of the convicts and palantines, and no one could travel unmolested, without a certificate of his freedom. Our situation appeared to us truly without remeid, and bitterly did we lament our cruel fate.

Fortunately for us, we had—more to have something to keep a lingering hope of escape awake, than with any prospect of success—for several Sundays employed ourselves in undermining a part of the clay floor under the dried grass upon which we slept. The hole passed under the logs; and we had ascertained that it would be opened behind a wild vine that spread its luxuriance over a great part of the side and roof of our prison. We did not open it at the outside, but contented ourselves by pushing a thin piece of a branch through, lest we had been discovered by the lynx eyes of our master and his sons. For weeks, things had remained in this state, we resolving to run for it, and again our hearts failing us, when one night we were aroused out of our sleep by fearful cries, mixed with the firing of rifles. It was the war-whoop of the Indians, who had come down on a plundering expedition, and to avenge some old aggression our master had perpetrated upon them. So well had they concerted their plans, that the house was

surrounded before any one knew of their being in the neighbourhood. We lay still and trembled, nor knew what was passing without. Rifle after rifle cracked, amidst the whooping of the Indians; no one came to release us from our confined place, and we were afraid to venture out by our hole, lest we should be perceived by the savages, and murdered; for we had been informed that, in a case like the present, they gave no quarter to man, woman, or child. At length, we could both smell and hear the crackling of fire raging without. In agony we dashed upon the door; it resisted our utmost effort; even death by the Indians, was preferable to death by fire in our present situation—it was horrible and astounding—the noise, too, was dreadful—animals and men, all the inmates of the enclosure, were uttering their wildest cries, and rushing round it in distraction. The fire had caught the place we were in. I entered our mine, and, by convulsive efforts, forced off the little turf and earth we had left. I crawled out, never rising from my belly, for I could perceive the Indians, like fiends, running about in all directions, anxiously gazing upon every object. The glare of the burning buildings cast a deep red ray of light around, rendering all fearfully distinct—my companions followed me—fortunately some tall bushes concealed us from the Indians as we crawled along the ground like serpents. The building we had left we saw was now burning most furiously; and the yelling continued. Thus we lay along upon the ground, trembling lest we would be discovered every moment. The Indians were passing and repassing where we lay, with their piercing eyes bent upon the smouldering ruins. The roof fell in, and no one appearing to issue out, they retired towards the dwelling-house, where the fire of rifles was still kept up, and the flames making fearful progress. I have been in several battles, both by sea and land; but no sound ever met my ears so appalling as the shout that

arose when the unfortunate inmates burst forth to force their way through their foes, or sell their lives as dearly as they could. The firing almost immediately ceased, and a fearful stillness ensued, almost as unbearable in our present situation as the former tumult. The ruins still continued to smoulder, and we feared even to breathe, lest we should betray ourselves to the Indians.

At length the sun shone forth in all his glory upon the smoking ruins—our drooping spirits were partly revived, and we crept to the edge of the bushes, and timidly looked around—no human being was to be seen, and, after some time, we ventured to rise to our feet. The Indians appeared to have retired to the forest with their booty, and we ventured forth. A sight the most appalling soon met our eyes—there, close by each other, the old man and two of his sons lay mangled and scalped; the other had been consumed in the house, having doubtless been shot from without, and unable to leave it with the others. Soon the nearest proprietors began to ride up to the scene of murder and desolation, armed to the teeth, but too late to give any assistance. The bodies of the two convicts were not found; many believed they had either gone off or been carried off by the Indians. Being heartily sick of America, I returned to Baltimore, where I did labouring work for a few months, until I had got myself well clothed; then agreed with the captain of a Greenock vessel to work my passage to Scotland, where I arrived, after an absence of two years and three months. Such is an instance of the nefarious system of which I was a victim."

THE PARSONAGE:

MY FATHER'S FIRESIDE.

After the lapse of about thirty years, I lately paid a visit to what had once been my father's fireside. It was in the month of October that I visited the manse of Kirkhall. My father had been minister of that parish; and I received a kindly welcome from his worthy successor—one of the warmest-hearted and most learned men in the Church of Scotland, whom I have long known and esteemed as a brother. I found myself again seated beside the hearth in the little parlour which was once gladdened with a mother's smile—which was once cheered with the childish sports of brothers and sisters—which was hallowed by the prayers and presiding virtues of an affectionate father. They are all departed to the land of spirits!

Yet, on looking round me, every object seemed to assure me that they were still near—for almost everything else was unchanged. On looking through the window from the elbow-chair in which I sat, the old and magnificent lime tree, which, in the days of my youth, spread its branches and foliage in wide luxuriance over the court, and gave assurance of shade and shelter, was still unscathed. Its sweet-scented flowers were indeed faded—for the breath of approaching winter had touched its verdure; but its variegated green and yellow leaves were the same as when I had seen them, and attempted, with boyish hands, to imitate, nearly half a century ago. A little farther off, the "decent church" peered from among the majestic ash, elm, and chestnut trees, with which it was surrounded—the growth

of centuries—casting a deep and solemn shadow over the place of graves. The humble offices, and the corn-yard in which I had rejoiced to mingle in rural occupations and frolic, were near ; and nothing was wanted to realize the scenes of my youth, save the presence of the venerable patriarch and my mother, and their little ones grouping around their knees, or at the frugal board.

But the illusion was short-lived. A holly tree, in the adjoining parterre, caught my eye. When I knew it of old, it was a little bush, in which the goldfinch and the linnet nestled, and were protected under my juvenile guardianship; but, now, it had grown up to a stately tree. I saw, in the mirror over the mantelpiece, the image of my own visage, in which there were lines that time and the world's cares imprint on the smoothest brow and the most blooming cheek. The yellow locks of my forehead were fled, and the few remaining hairs were beginning to be silvered with grey. My son, too, rising almost to manhood, stood up before me, unconscious of the recollections and visions which flitted through my mind. These things dispelled my reverie ; and my wandering thoughts were recalled to the realities of the passing hour.

It was on a Saturday evening that I thus revisited Kirkhall ; and my melancholy meditations were soon partially dissipated by the cheerful, but moderate hospitalities of my host ; which were truly such as to make me feel that I was, as it were, among mine own kindred, and at my *father's fireside.*

What a flood of emotions and remembrances spring forth at the mental utterance of these words! On retiring from the parlour, I was ushered into what was, of old, denominated, in the quaint colloquial language of Scotland, "The Prophet's Cham'er"—that is, the apartment for study, which was to be found thus distinguished in all the old manses of our clergy. It was now a bedroom, the library being

established in another apartment; and I laid my head upon the pillow in a chamber which was consecrated, in my memory, by the recollection that within its walls good men had often thought of "the ways of God to man," and prepared their spirits, in the depths of silence and seclusion, for proclaiming in the sanctuary the glad tidings of salvation.

It was a tempestuous night; and, though the blast was completely excluded from the manse by the dense masses of trees with which it was surrounded, the wind howled and moaned through their branches and on their summits, and, like the thunder, gave forth a solemn music to the soul. I did not sleep, but listened to the sounds of the tempest with that pleasure which philosophy cannot explain. Ere long, the current of thought reverted to my own former relations, to the dwelling in which I reposed; and busy memory, in the watches of the night, supplied, with all the freshness of a recent event, the circumstances which chequered the life and marked the character of my father. Though, perhaps, in the estimation of many, these were commonplace, yet, to me, they were still full of interest; and, as they seem to afford a true and undistorted picture of a Scottish clergyman's real character and fortunes, I have written them down to fill a spare corner in the *Tales of the Borders*.

William Douglas was the eldest son of a farmer in one of the northern counties of Scotland. The family had been tenants of the farm of Mains for five successive generations; and, so far as tradition and the humble annals of the parish could be relied on, had borne an unspotted name, and acquired that hereditary character for worth, which, in their humble station, may be regarded as constituting the moral nobility of human nature. Just and devout in their lives —sincere, unpretending, and unaffected in their manners— they were never spoken of but with respect and goodwill

by their neighbours; and were often, in the domestic and rural affairs of the vicinity, the counsellors and umpires, in whose good sense, and integrity, and kindness of heart, their humble friends trusted with confidence. Such characters and families are to be found in almost every rural district of this country; for, "though grace gangs no' by generation, yet there is sic a thing as a hawk o' a guid nest." I believe in the homely proverb, though some metaphysicians may dispute it, but whether debatable or not in the abstract, William Douglas had the good fortune, as he deemed it, to grow up in the bosom of a family in which the characteristic of worth was cherished and transmitted as an heirloom.

The eldest son of the guidman of Mains showed an early fondness for his school exercises, and acquired, under the tuition of *Roaring Jock*, the dominie of the parish, a tolerable proficiency in the rudiments of literature. The guidman, being an elder of the kirk, was often at the minister's manse, and the bairns from Mains were occasionally invited to tea on the Saturdays and play-days; and Paplay, the minister, (was so denominated, from the name of a small estate of which he was the laird), showed great favour to the "auldest callant," and often conversed with him about the subject of his reading. In these circumstances, and considering the religious character of the Mains family, it was almost a matter of course that Willie should be destined by his parents, and prompted by his own predilections, to "the ministry." And, by the advice of Paplay and Roaring Jock, Willie was sent to the Marischal College at Aberdeen, where he gained a bursary at the competition, and prosecuted his studies with assiduity, until, at length, in the fulness of time, he became a licentiate of the church.

The only thing I remember to have heard connected with this period of my father's life, was his anecdotes of Paplay's eccentricities, which were numerous—some of them

personal, and some of them the peculiarities of the old school of clergy in Scotland. He was a pious and orthodox man; but withal had a tincture of the Covenanter about him, blended with the aristocratic and chivalrous feeling of a country gentleman of old family. In the troubled times, about the years 1745–6, he was a staunch Whig; and so very decided in his politics, that, when "Prince Charlie's men" had the ascendancy in Scotland, he was either in arms or in hiding; and when he ventured to preach, he wore his sword in the pulpit, and a blue coat, girt with a belt, in which a pair of pistols were hung—more like a man of war than a preacher of peace! Even after the defeat at Culloden, the Jacobitism of the north was so strong, and Paplay was so obnoxious, by reason of his vehement preaching against popery, and prelacy, and the Pretender, that he continued long after to wear his sword (in the pulpit and elsewhere), which was rather a formidable concern to the nonjurors about him, in the hand of a brave and athletic champion of true Whiggery. He assigned three reasons for wearing his sword after it seemed to some of his friends to be unnecessary:—"First, because I am a gentleman; secondly, because I can use it; and, thirdly, because, if you doubt, you may try." Among some of his oddities, he had a great admiration of a well-spring, a white calf, and a bonny lass; and he never passed any of them in his way without doing them homage. Though travelling on horseback, he would dismount to bathe his feet in a limpid stream, as it gushed from the earth, or to caress a white calf, or to salute a female—all which fantasies were united with the most primitive innocence. And he never ate a meal, even in his own house, or when he was a refugee in a hay stack or kiln barn, without exacting from his wife and friends the most urgent *pressing*.

It was under the auspices of this warlike and singular apostle that my father was ushered into the sacred office of

a minister of the gospel. He preached his first sermon in the church of his native parish; and, according to the fashion of the times, at the close of the service, the parish minister publicly criticised the discourses of the day. The young preacher, in this instance, found favour in Paplay's eyes; and his testimony in favour of the *plant* which had sprung up among them was so emphatic, and rendered so piquant by his odd figures of speech, that William Douglas was long distinguished among his friends and neighbours by the familiar designation of *Paplay's Plant.*

But there was another *plant* that graced the manse, which was not unobserved or unadmired by the young preacher—Jane Malcolm (the daughter of a clergyman in a more remote parish, and niece of Paplay's lady), a sweet flower, that had grown up in the wilderness, like "a daisy on the mountain's side." It was in the nature of things that "the loves of the plants" should be illustrated by the juxtaposition of the two favourite flowers of the chivalrous parson. An affectionate but secret attachment naturally grew out of the frequent visits which "Paplay's Plant" paid to the manse; and these were multiplied in consequence of William Douglas being appointed assistant to his spiritual patron, whose decline into the vale of years had begun to abate the energy of his character, and to render assistance necessary. The attachment between the young people might be suspected, but was not formally made known to Paplay and "the lady," as she was called, according to the courtesy of the olden time. Indeed, such a promulgation would have been idle; for the "half-reverend" assistant (as Paplay was wont to address the young probationers of the church) had no immediate prospect of a benefice, although he was an acceptable preacher, throughout the bounds of the presbytery. But an incident occurred which facilitated the union, of which the preliminaries were thus established.

The Earl of Bellersdale,* a nobleman in the neighbouring county, who affected to be descended from an ancient family that flourished in the days of good King Duncan, but who had really no more connection with it than with Hercules or the Man in the Moon, reared a village or seaport at a short but convenient distance from his magnificent castle. Among the other items in the arrangements which were destined to immortalise the munificence of the Earl in the establishment of Bellerstown, a church was deemed necessary for political, to say nothing of moral considerations; and the earl, being a man of taste, thought that a church, placed in a particular position, would make a fine vista from various points in the noble park which surrounded the Castle of Bellersdale. A picturesque chapel was accordingly built on a rising knoll, separated from the pleasure grounds and the castle by a river, over which a handsome bridge made no mean addition to the lordly scene.

The chapel being built, and endowed with a stipend of "forty pounds a-year" (the hint, I suppose, was taken from Oliver Goldsmith), it was necessary to provide a clergyman to officiate in it; and William Douglas being one of the most approved young men in the district, had the honour to be preferred by the patron. The period to which I now refer was long before the church, in its wisdom, enacted a law for regulating chapels of ease; and not only the amount of stipend, but the continuance of clergymen who officiated in such chapels, depended on the arbitrary and sovereign will of their pious founders. Bellerstown, though a step in William Douglas' professional progress, yielded too scanty a revenue to admit of matrimony; but the talents, respectability, and prepossessing manners of the chaplain made him a favourite at the castle, and rendered

* A little reflection will enable the reader to see what true name this fictitious one is intended to cover.—Ed.

it practicable to eke out the slender living by the addition of a small farm, at what was called a moderate rent. But this appendage, too, was held by the same precarious tenure—Lord Bellersdale's will. The probationer was inducted as pastor of the Bellerstown chapel, according to the rules of the church; and, after the lapse of a few months, he and Miss Jane Malcolm thought—although no other person thought—that they might venture to enter into the holy bands of wedlock, and, with frugality and mutual love in their household, look forward to happiness in their humble and unambitious sphere of life. This thought ended in deed—and they were married.

The tenor of a clergyman's life is, in general, even and unvaried, consisting of a faithful and regular discharge of his peculiar duties. Such, for some years, was the fate of William Douglas. He acquired the confidence and affections of his humble flock—the esteem of his brethren—the countenance of the neighbouring gentry—and even the patronage of the great man, at whose table he was a frequent and welcomed guest. Mrs. Douglas had presented him with two sons: and his parents, advanced in years, were gathered to their fathers. This bereavement was not unlooked for; but the first trial of life which wrung his heart to the core, was a fatal illness which, in a few days, snatched the object of his most tender affection from him.

Time passed on, and "brought healing on its wings." After the lapse of several years, my father felt that it was not meet for man to be alone; and, whilst he cherished the fondest remembrance of his first domestic companion, he had too much good sense to go into the affectation of continuing single during the rest of his life "for her sake;" more especially as he had no female relative to whom he could confide the maternal charge of his boys in their nursery days. He accordingly discerned, in the daughter of one of his flock, a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood,

those personal attractions and amiable dispositions which awakened his manly sympathies; and, too high-minded to stoop to mercenary considerations, he married a second time, without hunting for a *tocher*, as is sometimes imputed sarcastically to the Scottish clergy. Isobel Wilson was lovely and virtuous.

About the time the American war ended, I came into this earthly part of the universe; but nothing occurred for several years of my father's life to diversify the peaceful enjoyments of his domestic life, or to interrupt the conscientious and zealous discharge of his pastoral duties. At length, however, a cloud gathered in the firmament, which ere long burst on his head, in the wrath of his patron, the Earl of Bellersdale.

Local, rather than general politics agitated the district in which his humble life was cast; and there was a vehement struggle betwixt his lordship and a neighbouring nobleman for ascendancy in the county. The ranks of either party were swelled by the multiplication of freehold qualifications, for the purpose of acquiring votes. One of the expedients, as is well known, for the attainment of such objects, is the creation of nominal and fictitious voters, by conferring on the *friends* of a political party an apparent, but not a real interest in a landed estate; and this is practised and justified by a legal fiction, and a little casuistry, with which political agents are quite familiar. The ordinary mode in these cases, is to confer such *parchment* franchises on dependents and personal connections of the great man who needs their support—and the Earl of Bellersdale, who had the patronage of many churches of greater or less value, found, even among the clergy who had hopes of preferment from his hand, several individuals sufficiently unscrupulous to accept of such discreditable titles to a political franchise as freeholders.* Amongst others, my father, who was in

* This was written in 1829, before the Reform Act was dreamt of.—Ed.

good odour at the castle, was deemed a *likely* person to be intrusted with so precious a privilege as a right to vote for any tool of the earl who might be brought forward as a candidate for representing the shire in Parliament. The factor was despatched to Bellerstown to offer this high behest to the poor parson, whose ready compliance was expected, *as a matter of course.* But he calmly and peremptorily refused the proffered vote, and intimated that he held it derogatory to the sacred nature of his office to pollute himself with such politics, and inconsistent with every principle of honour, morality, and religion, to take an oath, as required by law, that he was possessed of a landed estate, while, in truth, he had no earthly title to an inch of it. This scrupulosity gave mortal offence at the castle; and the recusant parson was doomed to ridicule as a pious fool, and to ruin. And as, in such cases, when an offending individual is completely dependent on the offended party, pretexts are never wanting for cloaking the lurking purpose of mischief: these were soon and easily discovered. If the minister of Bellerstown discoursed on integrity and truth as Christian virtues, or on the sacredness of an oath, the earl's underlings bore the tidings to the castle, where such doctrine was deemed high treason against the electioneering morality; and the faithful and fearless minister of religion having rebuked, from the pulpit, some gross and public enormities and violations of the Sabbath by the canvassers for the earl's candidate, within the precincts of his pastoral charge, this was a sad and unpardonable aggravation of his rebellion. Nay, having published a little tract on the duty of attending public worship, of which he was the known author, this was regarded as a direct personal insult to the lord of the manor — because his lordship was so much engrossed with politics and his other affairs, that he had, for some time, ceased entirely to go to church. These little incidents were aggravated by the perfidy of the parson of

the parish within which Mr. Douglas' chapel was situated. That gentleman had formed a scheme for transferring his residence from the ancient manse, in a remote part of the parish, to the more populous and flourishing burgh of barony of Bellerstown—intending to officiate himself in the chapel (receiving, of course, the additional accommodation applicable to that cure), and consigning the care of the souls in the parish church to the schoolmaster—a preacher whom he satisfied with a bonus of £10 or £12 a-year. And for the accomplishment of this object, it was no difficult thing, as matters stood, to ingratiate himself into the patron's favour, and to accomplish his own personal objects, by whispering into the earl's greedy ear every remark that would suit his purpose, made by Mr. Douglas, in the most unbounded confidence of private intercourse and seeming friendship.

When the wrath which had accumulated in the heart of the earl was fanned to its height, he issued his orders to the factor in the following decree:—"Rackrent—*Us*"—(a grammatical singularity which his lordship always used, surpassing even the royal or editorial majesty, indicated by the first person plural)—"*Us* is determined to root out that rebellious fellow Douglas, and to banish him from our grounds. Rackrent, order Spulzie, the scribe, instantly to serve the fellow with a summons of removing from Stable-barns; and, do you hear, go to Bellerstown, lock and nail up the chapel door, and tell the fellow that he shall never preach there again against *us*. Tell him to go to the devil, as *us* will not suffer rebels against our will."

This mandate was instantly obeyed. Mr. Douglas received the intimation from Rackrent with surprise, but undismayed; and, his "courage swelling as the danger swells," he accepted the intimation as a testimony to his fidelity, and pitied the tyrant who had thus abused his authority. The earl had the uncontrolled power—there

was no appeal from his heartless decree. Rackrent speedily promulgated in the burgh the purport of his mission, and ostentatiously performed his task of shutting up the chapel —putting the key in his pocket. Consternation, and sympathy with their "ain guid minister and his wife and bairns," spread from house to house; and it was not till the shadow of night afforded shelter from observation, that even a few true friends mustered courage to venture into the house of a proscribed man, and to cheer him with their condolence.

Mr. Douglas had an instinctive courage, which prompted him to bear Rackrent's message without a quiver on his countenance, save perhaps a momentary expression of scorn on his lip, and a sparkle of indignation in his keen blue eye. But, after the minion of power had retired, and he felt himself alone, a cold and chilling emotion gathered round his heart. He went immediately to the nursery, where his wife was busied in tending and amusing her children; and having desired Grace Grant (our attached and only servant, who never was in any other service) to look after her matters in the kitchen, he communicated to his dear Isobel, that she and her little ones were thrown destitute. I was too young (being only four or five years of age at the time) to understand the import of what he said. But my mother and the elder children knew it well; and I need not describe the scene. The tears which a brave man sheds are only those of tenderness and affection—but these are, indeed, tears of bitterness. Such scenes of love and agony are too sacred to be disclosed to an unfeeling world; and all I remember of the one now alluded to, was, that my heart was like to break when I saw those around me embracing and embraced, in tears and in silence, save the sounds of sobs which burst from every bosom.

It was a day of sorrow. Even the youngsters forgot, for a time, that they required their wonted frugal dinner; and it was not until twilight succeeded the last blaze of the

setting sun, that Grace Grant called her mistress from the nursery (having heard from a neighbour the adversity which had befallen), to remind her that tea was ready. My mother was now much composed, and invited the minister to go to the parlour. It was a silent procession. My eldest brother carried me in his arms; and my father led his wife in one hand, while he bore their younger babe on his other arm. On reaching the parlour, we found tea prepared by the careful hands of Grace Grant; but, before sitting down to partake of that comforting refreshment, the minister proposed to offer up a prayer of resignation to the will of God, and of hope and trust in his providence.

"Then kneeling down to Heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear;
Together hymning their Creator's praise—
In such society yet still more dear,
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.'

These devout aspirations being ended, an air of calm composure reigned around my "Father's Fireside." He seated himself in his arm-chair, while my mother busied herself in preparing tea, and each little one took his appointed place around the oval wainscot table. The turf fire burned cheerily on the hearth. The tea-kettle gave out its hissing sounds, indicative of comfort; and the solitary candle diffused light on the fair young faces which brightened as the oat-cake and the "buttered pieces" began to disappear. But the minister's wonted playfulness was gone; and the decent silence of a Sabbath afternoon was observed even by the younger boys.

The visits of their friends were a solace in the first hour of their unlooked-for adversity. But, after their retirement

the vague, undefined, and gloomy shadows which rose to the contemplation of my parents, with respect to their future prospects, yielded only a troubled and unutterable anxiety. Repining and supineness, however, were not suited to my father's character; for, with mildness, he united decision and even boldness of spirit. He had, for several years previous to this explosion of lordly despotism in the patron of his chapel, corresponded with some of his college friends in the new Republic of America; and had been encouraged by them, and through them, by one of the most distinguished of the American patriots, to leave his meagre benefice and cross the Atlantic. These invitations he had declined; being warmly attached to his flock, to the Established Church of Scotland, to his friends at home, and to his country. In his altered circumstances, however—severed as he was by an arbitrary act over which there was no moral or legal control, cast destitute from the altar at which he had ministered with usefulness and acceptance, and having no claims to immediate patronage in the church—he resolved, with a heavy heart, to betake himself to that field of exertion in a foreign land to which he had been so courteously invited. Having adopted this resolution, he did not waste time in idle whining, but prepared to encounter all the inconveniences and perils of a long voyage across the deep; aggravated, unspeakably, by the accompaniments of a wife and six young children, and hampered by the scanty means which remained to him amidst this wreck of his hopes of happiness at home.

But before his final departure from the cold and rocky shore of Scotland for ever, he wished to take a public leave of his flock. His own chapel had been shut up; but a reverend friend, in a closely adjoining burgh, acceded at once to his request, that he might have the use of his pulpit on the Sunday after the act of ejection which I have already mentioned. The villagers of Bellerstown were speedily

apprised of their minister's intention; and they and many others attended to hear his farewell sermon. The church was crowded with an affectionate and even somewhat exasperated multitude, and the service of the day was characterised by a more than usual solemnity. All the energy of the preacher's spirit was called up to sustain him on so trying an occasion; and the unaffected, earnest, and native eloquence of his pulpit appearances, were heightened by the emotions which struggled within his bosom.

His brief but christianlike and dignified address, in which the tremulous voice of deep emotion was occasionally mingled with the manly tones of bolder elocution, was listened to in silence deep as death; and when he descended from the pulpit, Mr. Douglas was surrounded by a throng of elders, and young men, and humble matrons, who were eager to manifest their heartfelt reverence for their beloved pastor.

It were tedious and profitless to detail all the painful circumstances which intervened betwixt the time now referred to and that of the minister's embarkation. He experienced, on the one hand, all the petty vexations which the earl's sycophants could devise for his annoyance—and, on the other, much of that comfort which springs from spontaneous tokens of disinterested goodwill and of gratitude, even from the poor and humble; but the *mens conscia sibi recti* enabled him to bear the former with composure, and the latter without vain presumption.

The day of departure at length arrived—and, young as I was, I still remember as well as yesterday some of the circumstances. The family proceeded from the only home I had ever known, towards the harbour, accompanied by some of the most respectable inhabitants of the village.

After passing by the chapel, which stood conspicuously on a rising ground, the party descended a steep road—like a patriarch of old going on a pilgrimage through the world,

with his children around him—to the quay at which the vessel that was to bear us away was moored. The sea beach and quays were crowded. The entire population of the burgh seemed assembled. There were no shouts; but uncovered heads, and outstretched hands, and old visages glistening with tears of kindness, spoke a language more eloquent than words can utter. I was carried with my mother on board the ship. The sails were unfurled, while we were grouped on the quarter-deck. Most of the family went into the cabin; but my father sat on a coil of ropes, and I stood between his knees, encircled by his arm, and looking up in his face, which was occasionally convulsed with marks of strong but suppressed feeling. The vessel bounded over the waves of the German Ocean. My father spake not. His eye was still bent on the rocky cliffs (near which stood his church and dwelling of peace), after it could not discern the people that clustered on their summits. He wrapped me in his cloak, and held me to his bosom; and, for the first time, I felt a sad consciousness that I was without a home in the world.

My first voyage in life was a rough one. The "Good Intent" of Bellerstown, in which my father and his family had embarked, as already stated, was a coasting trader, and was bound on this occasion for Leith, whence the patriarch of this intended emigration, and his partner, and little ones, were meant to be transferred to Greenock, as the port of final embarkation for the United States. To those who have had occasion to sojourn in such bottoms as the "Good Intent," ere yet the Berwick smacks and other vessels of a superior class had been established in the coasting trade of Scotland, it is needless to offer any description of such a vehicle for the conveyance of human beings—and those who have never experienced such a transit, can form no adequate conception of the misery which it exhibits. Let them, however, imagine a small and dirty cabin, into which no one is

admitted save by the companion-door and a small sky-light that cannot be opened in rough weather—let them imagine, if they can, the "villanous compound of smells," produced by confined air, the flavour of bilge water, agitated in the hold of the ship, and diffused through every creaking crevice, and pitch, and effluvia of rancid salt meat and broth, and the products of universal sea-sickness, altogether inevitable in such circumstances—let them figure such a confined hole filled with human beings, crammed into smaller holes all around, called beds, or laid on shake-downs upon the floor, or stretched upon the lockers, in that state of despondency which overwhelming sickness induces;—and they have a picture of the Good Intent's cabin and *state-room* during the voyage to which I refer. Nor was this all. The weather was boisterous, being the vernal equinox; the winds cross and tempestuous; and the waves of the sea so tremendous that the little vessel sunk, and rose, and rolled, as if each succeeding shock were the last ere she sank for ever into the roaring abyss; while each convulsion of the bark called forth involuntary moans and shrieks of distress, which were heard commingled with the whistling of the tempest, and the dash of the waves, that ever and anon burst on and swept over the deck. And thus, for the space of fourteen days went the Good Intent and her inmates, tossed to and fro on the German Ocean, with no comfort to mitigate the extreme of such unwonted sufferings, save the rough but hearty kindness of the skipper and crew, when their cares on deck left them a moment to go below, and offer any attention in their power. I have made many rough voyages since the time alluded to; but this one dwells on my memory like the visions in a wild and troubled dream, surpassing all I have since weathered in intensity of horror and dismay.

At length, the expected haven came in sight; and we entered it—safe but sad enough, the Good Intent entered

the Water of Leith at morning tide, and my childish wonderment was strangely excited by what seemed to my inexperienced eye a forest of masts and "leviathans afloat," as we were towed through among the vessels in harbour, until, amidst bawling and swearing on board and ashore, the Good Intent got a berth at the Coalhill of Leith. The emigrant party were all speedily taken on shore, and conveyed to a small inn, where soap and water, and clean clothes, and breakfast, revived, in no inconsiderable degree, the spirits of the whole party, after the exhaustion of such a voyage: and the youngsters, especially, were very speedily interested in the rude bustle which the shore of Leith usually exhibits.

Leaving the little colony at Mrs. Monro's ship tavern, on the Coalhill, my father proceeded to the dwelling of his cousin, Mr. Pearson, who resided in one of the western suburbs of Edinburgh (where he and his were expected), in order to announce the advent to a temporary home. It was after noon ere he returned with his cousin to conduct the rest of the family; and the whole party proceeded on foot up Leith Walk, and through a part of Edinburgh, towards Mr. Pearson's hospitable abode, astonished and bewildered in a scene so new. There we all received a warm welcome from the good old man and his daughters, and experienced every attention and kindness which good hearts and the ties of kindred could suggest.

Before proceeding to Greenock, to make the necessary arrangements for the final emigration, Mr. Douglas, while his family were refreshing with their relatives for a longer voyage than they had already encountered, paid a visit to an old friend, a clergyman in the country, in whose parish was situated the noble mansion of Earl H——. The countess of H—— was a relative of Lady B——, to whom Mr. Douglas had long been known as an exemplary clergyman, and who, in the day of his adversity and unmerited perse-

cution, had taken a lively interest in his fate. Amongst other acts of kindness, she had not only given him an introductory letter to the countess of H——, but had written previously, recommending him earnestly to her good offices with the earl (who was, in all respects, a complete contrast to Lord Bellersdale), and soliciting some one of the numerous benefices in the church of which the earl was patron, when a vacancy might occur. Mr. Douglas visited his friend before delivering his introduction at the great house, and preached on the Sabbath which intervened during his stay: and the services of the day having been conducted with that simple and unfeigned devoutness which lends its highest power to pulpit eloquence, the noble family, who regularly attended on religious ordinances in their parish church, were much affected and gratified with the ministration of the stranger on this occasion; and this effect was not marred to "ears polite," even by the slight "accents of the northern tongue." Next morning, the pastor of the parish received an invitation to dine at H—— House that day, and was requested to bring along with him the friend who had officiated for him on the preceding Sunday. The invitation was, of course, accepted; and, on being introduced to the earl and countess of H——, and his name being announced, Lady H—— inquired if he were of the north country, when he took the opportunity of delivering Lady B.'s introductory letter, which showed that Mr. Douglas was the same person of whom Lady B. had previously written. His reception by both the noble personages of the mansion was more than polite; it was kind in the highest degree, and every way worthy of a generous and high-minded race, whose good qualities have, in various periods of our history, given lustre to the nobility of Scotland. The day was spent with mutual satisfaction; and the earl, before parting, gave Mr. Douglas a cordial shake by the hand, and assured him that the first benefice that

should fall in his gift, should be conferred on him. Thus they parted; but Mr. Douglas returned to Mr. Pearson's, with the unaltered purpose of pursuing his voyage to America—the hopes inspired by the earl's spontaneous promise being too faint and remote, in their possible accomplishment, to induce procrastination in his proceedings. The love of his native country yearned in his bosom, and all the perils and privations to which his little fireside-flock might be exposed, passed through his thoughts as he drove along the southern shore of the Forth, on his return; but he could see no immediate alternative, save to go onward in the path which he had previously chalked out for himself in his present circumstances.

Accordingly, after a few days' repose, he set out to Greenock, to make arrangements for the passage to New York of himself and family. He applied to an eminent merchant there on the subject, in whose service, as a clerk, a favourite brother had lived and died. From that gentleman he received every courtesy and counsel suited to the occasion, and was offered the passage contemplated gratuitously. He had spent a day or two only in Greenock, making preparations for the voyage, when, having gone into the vessel in which he was destined to embark, to hold some necessary consultation with the master, a packet was brought to him which had been forwarded by Mr. Pearson to the care of Mr. B. the merchant. On unsealing it, Mr. Douglas found inclosed a presentation in his favour, by the Earl of H., to a living in one of the southern counties of Scotland!

It were idle in any one who has never experienced a sudden and unexpected transition in the endless vicissitudes of human life—from a position encompassed with doubts and darkness, into scenes and prospects of brighter omen—to attempt any delineation of Mr. Douglas' emotions on this occasion; for, who can express in language the throb of grati-

tude to benefactors, which, in such circumstances, swells the heart beyond the power of utterance?—or who can convey any adequate notion of the devout and silent thankfulness which exalts the soul of a good man, when he sees and feels, in such an event, the manifestation of that overruling Providence which it is his habitual principle to acknowledge and adore?

The American expedition was now abandoned, and Mr. Douglas returned from Greenock to Edinburgh, with all the despatch which the *Flies* of those days rendered practicable. The tidings were soon told, not with proud exultation, but with the chastened gladness which these were calculated to impress on his own spirit and all around him; and, instead of packing up for Greenock, and preparing for crossing the wide Atlantic, nothing was now talked of in Pearson's kind circle but *plenishing* for the manse.

The day of departure at length arrived, ere yet the young folks had recovered from the astonishment which everything in the northern metropolis presented to them as wonders, and before they had become familiar with the splendours of long rows of lamps, and dazzling scattered lights over the dusky horizon of the "Auld Toun" in an evening. One of the most startling of these marvels, I well remember, was the Cowgate, with its rows of lamps extending beneath the South Bridge, and seen through the iron balustrades! This was perfect enchantment to some of us; and I don't believe I have ever seen any scene of artificial magnificence, since I first looked down on the Cowgate, that made so strong an impression on me, as a specimen of city grandeur!

The vehicle for our conveyance was not, as in these latter days, a dashing stage-coach and four—for there was nothing of the kind on the public roads of Scotland fifty years ago—but a caravan or wagon, having a sort of rail round three sides of it, and covered overhead with a canvas

cloth on strong hoops, with an aperture behind to let in the travellers, and the fresh air, and the light. Under this primitive pavilion sat ensconced the parson and spouse on trusses of straw, and with blankets to keep warmth, if necessary—the bairns being all packed in and about them, according to their dimensions; and in this fashion on jogged the cavalcade, consisting of the caravan, and another long cart with furniture. Two or three days were required for the journey—the carriers stopping each night at convenient distances in country inns for the "entertainment of men and horses," where slight and rough accommodation only was to be had.

At length, on the third day, the caravansary reached the promised land—not like that in the Orient, flowing with milk and honey, and glowing in all the richness of natural beauty; but a long straggling village of heath-thatched cottages, with about half-a-dozen slated houses, including the kirk; and, though placed in a valley, on the banks of a rivulet, yet surrounded on all sides for many miles with the wildest moorlands in one of the most elevated situations inhabited in Scotland by human beings. But, what of all this? It afforded a *home* in our native land—and we soon learnt by experience that its inhabitants were among the most kind-hearted and intelligent of the sons of Caledonia.

The humble parsonage of Muirden was but a chapel of ease, yielding an income under one hundred pounds per annum. Yet, with this limited benefice, the Rev. William Douglas was enabled, by the frugal housewifery of the mistress, to maintain a decent, and, in his sphere, even a hospitable household, and to discharge the petty obligations to friends which he had incurred while "out of bread," and preparing to cross the deep to a foreign land. Until this last, and, in his estimation, sacred duty was accomplished, the strictest economy was observed. The "muckle

wheel" and the "little wheel" were heard humming incessantly in the kitchen; and the bairns were clad in the good home-made cloths of the domicile; while they were early taught practically that plain and wholesome, though humble fare at the board, was all that they ought to desire, and that luxuries and delicacies, such as load "the rich man's table," were truly a matter of small moment, and utterly despicable when compared with those luxuries of the mind, and that superiority of character, which are derived from moral and intellectual culture. These latter, accordingly, were day by day pressed on their attention as the proper business of their early life—and all were habituated to regular and constant attention to their "lessons," at home as well as in school.

Nor was this remote parsonage destitute of some strong and interesting attractions to a generous mind. Muirden was situated in a region which is consecrated by many events and traditions of "the persecuted times." There are hill-sides and moss-hags in its vicinity, still known to the peasant as the places of worship and of refuge to the Covenanters in days of peril and alarm; and some of Scotland's martyrs were immolated at the doors of their own huts, the foundation of which may still be traced, overgrown with the green turf or the heather-bell. To a Scottish pastor such scenes are classic, grand even in a higher sense than those of Marathon or Thermopylæ—for it was the immutable and holy spirit which was there kindled, and formed into a flame, that finally won for Scotland not only the blessings of civil liberty, but the triumphs of religious truth.

It was an inspiriting task to serve at the altar among a people who, though humble, cherished with fondness the memory of their godly forefathers; and was, indeed, a labour of love, in which the teacher and the taught found mutual comfort and advantage. Nor were the exercises of

the pulpit the only parts of pastoral duty to which Mr. Douglas directed his attention and his heart. He visited and soon became acquainted with all his flock—not formally and pompously, but frankly and in unaffected kindness; and ere long became the friend and trusted counsellor of his parishioners, not merely in spiritual, but in their temporal concerns. And, as a proof of the impression which such a truly evangelical course of conduct made among his people, I may state that, within these few years, after the lapse of nearly fifty, I had a call from a respectable old man, who, having heard I was in Edinburgh, had found me out, and announced himself to be Mr. ——, who had taught me the alphabet, and first guided my hand to wield the pen which now records this incident. I have rarely met with an occurrence more gratifying to my feelings, than when the old gentleman (for he was a gentleman in the best sense of the term, though a country schoolmaster) told me that years had not effaced from his heart and his memory the kindly affection which he bore to my father and all his children, who were the objects of his careful tuition, and that he had sought and found me to give utterance to that feeling. I need not say he got a warm welcome. He had then retired from the laborious duties of his office, with a moderate competency, and in a green old age. He has since paid the debt of nature. Peace to his ashes! It would be well if our parochial clergy would thus cultivate, not the vulgar arts of wordly popularity, but, by acts of real kindness, the confidence and the respect of their flocks. It is thus that the human heart is to be won; and it is thus that a Christian pastor most effectually

"Allures to brighter realms, and leads the way."

There was a peculiarity in the village of Muirden which I must not omit to notice. It was, perhaps, the first locality in Scotland, so entirely rural, that had a library established

in it. I do not know precisely the history of that institution; but its supporters were the general community of the place, who were, in different grades, employed chiefly in the working of some mines in the vicinity, who devoted a small portion of their wages, periodically, for the purchase of books for the library The fruits of this establishment were visible in the decent and orderly habits, and in the superior information of the whole population; presenting a moral picture exactly the reverse of that which too often characterises the now liberated *ascripti glebæ* who are usually engaged in such occupations, and who are proverbially the most barbarous and ignorant class of the community of Scotland—thus furnishing an example, which is now become pretty general, of supplying an interesting and improving employment of the hours of relaxation from labour, instead of misspending the precious intervals at the alehouse or other houses of debauchery.

The village of Muirden, too, had the advantage of a resident country gentleman in its immediate neighbourhood—Mr. Sterling. Such an auxiliary to the clergyman and schoolmaster in a rural district, is generally of unspeakable advantage to the moral condition of the locality, more especially when, as in this instance, he was a man everyway worthy of his rank and position in society. He possessed an estate of his own in one of the most beautiful provinces in Scotland; but, being a man distinguished in science, he had a general supervision of the works to which I have alluded; and, being thus clothed with authority, as well as a magistrate in the county, he was ever ready to co-operate in every measure which was beneficial, and in the repression of whatever was pernicious, in this little colony. The society and friendly intercourse which naturally arose betwixt such a country gentleman and the pastor, formed no slight addition to the enjoyments of the latter, in a sphere shut out by its position from much personal intercourse

with well-educated men; and, in short, amid mountain and moor all around, Muirden presented one of the most pleasing pictures that this country affords of a rural parsonage.

Mr. Douglas' zealous and faithful discharge of his pastoral duties did not remain unknown to his noble patron. From the time, indeed, of his induction at Muirden, the moral movements of that hamlet were occasionally reported by its guardian, Mr. Sterling, to the family that was interested in its prosperity; and the unremitting but unobtrusive ministrations of the village pastor were not of course overlooked. These were duly appreciated; and, after the lapse of only two or three years, the Earl of H—— spontaneously, and without any previous communication, presented Mr. Douglas to the benefice of Eccleshall, which had fallen vacant by the demise of its minister. This change had the double advantage of being on the regular establishment of the church, beyond the risk of any such casualty as had formerly befallen the presentee, and of having a stipend nearly double the salary at Muirden—a consideration of no slight moment to a man with a family, however moderate in his views with regard to temporalities; and it possessed the further superiority over Muirden, that it was situated on the southern shore of the Frith of Forth, in a district of country highly cultivated, and within a few hours' ride of the metropolis. It had the charm of the most perfect seclusion from the great and bustling world—the church and manse being situated in a sheltered valley, embosomed amidst a cluster of ancient trees, which probably were planted ere the Reformation dawned in Scotland.

The tidings of this promotion, as it may be deemed, produced, in the humble dwelling of the pastor of Muirden, that measure of gladness which is inspired by the smiles of fortune—varying in degree among the different members of the family according to their intelligence and their years.

To the heads of it, the promised improvement in their condition afforded the calm, yet exquisite satisfaction which the prospect of a competence for their little ones, and the means of educating and preparing them to act their part in life, naturally awakens; and in the younger members of it, the reported beauties of the new parish, and the approach of a new journey, excited that joyousness and vivacity of hope which even invests what is unknown with the attribute of magnificence.

After a little while devoted to necessary arrangements—after many visits paid to all the dwellings of the humble flock of Muirden—after the interchange of kindly hospitalities among the superior classes of his neighbours—and after a public and affectionate farewell to all—Mr. Douglas once more set out with his family on this, his last migration; and, with the aid of caravan and cart, the family party went on their way from Muirden to Edinburgh, retracing thus far their steps, on their journey to Eccleshall; and, in a few days, they were set down in the court before the manse of Eccleshall, over which two stately lime trees formed a cooling shade from the fervours of a summer sun.

Whether the reality corresponded with the several anticipations of the new comers or not, I will not pretend to affirm; but the arrival had scarcely been accomplished, ere every room and recess of the manse was explored, and the neat and beautiful gardens were traversed, and the glebe surveyed, and the "bonny burnside" visited, and the water laved from its channel. It was, in truth, a new world to its young visitants—and appeared, in the superior house accommodation and rural amenity around, a terrestrial paradise, contrasted with the circumscribed dwelling on the rocky shore of the German Ocean in the north, or in the hamlet of Muirden amid the wilderness on the southern border of Scotland. The sensations and sympathies of that

day, and of seven years which followed it, are yet fresh in my recollection, and still swell in my heart, as marking the brightest and the happiest period of my existence. Everything connected with that season of my life, is still invested in my memory with charms which I have never since tasted; and my young imagination clothed the vale of Eccleshall with a brighter verdure and gayer flowers than ever to me bloomed elsewhere on earth; and the heaven glowed in more resplendent sunshine than has ever since poured its golden radiance on my vision—for it was the sunshine of the young spirit still unclouded by a speck on its moral horizon, and undimmed by a tear of real suffering and sorrow. Are such youthful enchantments realities in the condition of man? or are they visions of fancy, which are kindled by a gracious dispensation of Providence, as a solace to the heart in riper years, when the cares, and toils, and anxieties of manhood are strewed thick in our path, and frown heavily in clouds over every stage of our progress?

In a few days after the house was put in order, the induction of Mr. Douglas took place; and, although not so impressive as a Presbyterian ordination, it was to all, his own family at least, an interesting scene. A numerous assemblage of the parishioners and the reverend brethren was convened; and the arrival of the latter, successively or in groups—their friendly greetings in the parlour, their progress to the church, and their solemn devoir during the service of the day—bore a character of dignity and impressiveness which does not now generally belong to such ceremonials. It may, perhaps, be unphilosophical, and not in accordance with more modern sentiment, to ascribe any efficacy to mere externals of costume. But it is a principle deeply implanted in human nature, and not to be stifled by any cold reasoning in the matter, that external decorum and suitable habiliments in any of the solemnities of religion and the administration of justice, have a powerful

effect on the great mass of mankind, which it is not wise to cast aside or contemn.

It were an easy, and would be a pleasant task, to paint some of the scenes and characters which presented themselves to my observation even at that early period of life; but it would be foreign to the object I had in view, and would swell this humble narrative beyond the limits assigned to it. That object was merely to delineate some of the features in the character of a faithful Scottish clergyman, and to exhibit some of the "lights and shadows" which cheer or cloud his existence, like that of other men. I have traced his progress through various alternations of adversity and prosperity, and have placed him in circumstances such as usually fill up the measure of a Christian's ambition—a position of usefulness to those within the sphere of his influence, and of comfort in his temporal condition. During the space of seven years, it was the lot of the individual who, in real life, was the prototype of our story, to enjoy health, and strength, and domestic felicity, and to discharge his duties with zeal and advantage in the parish of Eccleshall; but, returning home after nightfall, from attending a meeting of synod in Edinburgh, he caught a severe cold in riding during a stormy night, which affected his lungs; and, ere long, his indisposition assumed all the symptoms of pulmonary consumption.

Our tale of humble life now draws to a close. In the course of a few months, the indisposition of Mr. Douglas assumed all the symptoms of a settled consumption, which continued to present to his family and friends the alternations of hope and of fear, that are the unfailing companions of that subtle visitation. A sea voyage, native air, and all other expedients suggested by skill or affection, were tried in vain; and, in the fiftieth year of his age, the minister of Eccleshall returned to the bosom of his family, with a full anticipation that the distemper under which he lingered

would, ere long, prove fatal. His eyes sparkled with more than wonted lustre—his benevolent and intelligent countenance glowed with the delicate hectic flush which so often marks the progress of consumption—and the healthy, but not robust frame of its victim, became emaciated and feeble. The fall of the year 179-, brought the chilling blasts of November to quench the flickering spark of life in his bosom.

I was despatched one cold morning on the pony for Mr. Blythe, a neighbouring clergyman and friend, to pay my father a visit. We rode together from his manse to Eccleshall; and, on his arrival, he remained alone with my father, engaged in those hallowed communings betwixt a dying man and his spiritual comforter which it is unseemly and sacrilegious in any case to disclose to mortal eyes. After a considerable space thus spent, the whole family, including the servants, were, by my father's directions, summoned to the side of his couch, in the Red Room, where he reposed. When all were assembled, he intimated, with composure and resignation, that he was conscious of the near approach of death, and addressed a few sentences of admonition and affection to them all; and, having done so, he requested Mr. Blythe to unite with his household in prayer and praise—requesting that the last hymn in the beautiful collection of sacred lyrics attached to our national psalmody, might be sung. My father's pulpit psalm-book was brought to Mr. Blythe. It is now before me, and I transcribe, from its page, with a vivid recollection of the scene now referred to, one of the solemn stanzas of that touching anthem:—

"The hour of my departure's come,
I hear the voice that calls me home;
At last, O Lord! let troubles cease,
And let thy servant die in peace!"

Mr. Blythe breathed, rather than sung the hymn, in

the notes of Luther's hundredth psalm; and he did it with the accompaniment of tremulous and broken accents from all around the couch. The tears of unutterable sorrow were shed by all, save my mother, whose grief could not find a vent in tears. The voice of psalms was quenched amid the sobs which burst from every heart; and, during the singing of the last portion of it, the pious man who guided these orisons, sympathized so deeply in the passion of lamentation which encompassed him, that his accents were scarcely audible. The overpowering scene was closed by a brief and pathetic prayer to the Most High, that to His dying servant he would "stretch out His everlasting arms," and "to the friendless prove a friend."

A few hours more, and the scene of life had passed away from the mortal vision of William Douglas. I saw him die. It was the first deathbed I had ever seen. There are many occurrences in life which fill the mind with awe; but I have never been conscious of any emotion so profound and solemn as that which possessed me during the last day of my father's life. I witnessed the expiring flame in those dread moments when time is blent with eternity, and when the last sigh seems to waft the immortal spirit into a state of existence of which no adequate conception can be formed. After all was over, and the breath of life had fled, I could not believe my senses, that the prop of my affections was gone from my love and my embrace, and that all which remained on earth of my father, protector, and gentle monitor, was a lifeless wreck on the shore of time. The world appeared to my young eye and heart as a wide scene of mere darkness and desolation.

I will not dwell on subsequent events. The funeral obsequies performed, the family councils were of a melancholy description. As to worldly matters, it was ascertained that there was very little debt—not more than could be fully paid by the current stipend and other limited means;

but, beyond this, all was a dreary blank. The only means of subsistence to which my widowed mother could look with certainty, was her small annuity of £25 a-year; while one only of the family (the eldest boy, who had been educated as a surgeon, and had got an appointment in the East India Company's service) could do ought to eke out the means of life for the family. In the depth of her affliction, she would say, with pious confidence, in the language of scripture, "I have never seen the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread."

But, leaving these painful retrospects, it may not be inappropriate to note briefly the career of the earl of Bellersdale, whom I had occasion to advert to in the earlier part of this story. He survived my father many years, and spent his life devoid of domestic happiness or public respect, in the accumulation of wealth and the pursuits of sordid ambition. He lived detested and despised of mankind; and, dying unlamented by any one human being, he destined the vast treasures which he had amassed, to constant accumulation, not to be enjoyed fully by his heirs, but for the creation of a princedom of indefinite extent and wealth. But the honours of the Bellersdale family were speedily tarnished. A spendthrift successor squandered all the revenues which he could touch; and the last time I visited that part of the country, the splendid mansion of Bellersdale Castle was stripped of all its movables; the collections of many years of aristocratic pride—the pictures, the statues, the very board destined for baronial hospitality—were all brought to the hammer for payment of a tailor's bill for gewgaws to grace a court pageant; and the nominal inheritor of the wide domains and honours of his lordship's house, is an obscure and useless, though good-natured dependent upon Hebrew usurers and Gentile pettifoggers—a mere cumberer of the ground—a sycophant of the vulgar!

I need not point the moral of my tale.

THE SEERS' CAVE.

"The desert gave him visions wild—
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swell'd with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death:
Thus the lone seer, from mankind hurl'd,
Shap'd forth a disembodied world."

SCOTT.

IN a certain wild and romantic glen in the Highlands of Scotland, there is a cave opening beneath the brow of a huge overhanging cliff, and half concealed by wreathed roots and wild festoons of brier and woodbine. Several indistinct traditions remain of this cave's having been, in former days, the abode of more than one holy hermit and gifted seer. From these it derived the name which it commonly received, Coir-nan-Taischatrin, or, The Cave of the Seers. At a little distance within the glen, upon its sunny side, stood Castle Feracht. The elevation on which it was built, gave it a prospect of the whole glen, without detaching it from the hills and woods around; and a space had been cleared of trees, so that, though completely surrounded, their leafy screen only curtained, not obscured it.

Castle Feracht had long been the residence of a powerful branch of the Macphersons. In that far retirement repeated generations of that daring family had grown up and rushed forth, like young eagles from their mountain-eyrie, to the field of strife; and not unfrequently never to return. Such had been the fate of Angus Macpherson, in consequence of an accidental rencounter with the Gordons, between whom and the Macphersons there had long subsisted a

deadly feud. The death of his father had the effect of fixing upon the mind of his son Ewan Macpherson a feeling of stern and deadly resentment against all who had ever been the foes of his turbulent clan. The stripling seemed to fret at the slow pace of time, and to long for those years in which his arm might have sufficient force to wield his father's broadsword, that he might rush to vengeance. Such had often been his secret thoughts, when he at length reached a period of life which made him able to put the suggestions of his vindictive mind into execution; but a strong and arousing spirit, to which we need not farther allude, passed over the land, and he forgot for a time his personal animosities, in feelings and purposes of a more general and absorbing nature. The powerful sympathy of thousands, lending all their united energies towards one point, and laying aside their individual pursuits, in order to contribute to the advancement of that all-engrossing aim, laid its influence upon his soul, and he joined the company, and aided in the general plans of those whom he would have joyed to have met in deadly combat. Those against whom his hostility had been less violent, he had learned to meet almost on terms of friendship, though dashed at times with looks of coldness.

Among those half-forgiven foes, was Allan Cameron, a younger son of that family of the Camerons which stood next in hereditary dignity to the chief. The feud between the Macphersons and Camerons had never been very deadly, and might, perhaps, have been forgotten, had Macpherson been less accustomed to "rake up the ashes of his fathers." Cameron, though still a very young man, had been obliged early to mingle with the world, and had acquired that habit of ready decision which gives its possessor an ascendancy over almost all with whom he has any intercourse. Notwithstanding his youth, therefore, he was of considerable influence; and being brought repeatedly into contact

with Macpherson, there was something of a shy and distant friendship between them. Cameron soon perceived the coldness of Macpherson; but, as his own generous and cultivated mind was far superior to the influence of prejudices, such as had thrown a gloom over the whole being of Macpherson, he knew not, never dreamt, that he was an object of secret dislike to him; and, with his usual frank kind-heartedness, exerted himself to win the favour of a man so distinguished for personal daring as the dark-browed lord of Glen Feracht.

During the course of the operations in which they were engaged, the decisive resolution and activity of Cameron had repeatedly attracted the notice of Macpherson. Several times had he said to himself, "Were he not a Cameron, he would be a gallant fellow!" At length, one day Macpherson was severely wounded, and rescued from immediate death by the fearless intrepidity and fiery promptness of Cameron. Macpherson's stern sullenness was subdued. Ere yet recovered from his wounds, he clasped Cameron's hand in token of cordial friendship; and so far laid aside his distant coldness, as to invite Allan Cameron to accompany him to Glen Feracht, when their present enterprise should have come to a termination.

That termination came sooner than had been expected; and Cameron found it not only convenient but prudent to accompany his fellow soldier to the secret retreat of Castle Feracht. Cameron, an ardent admirer of nature's beauties, yielded all his soul to the emotions inspired by the wild and rugged entrance to Glen Feracht; nor could he suppress repeated exclamations of delight when all the softer beauties of the quiet glen opened upon his sight. Macpherson observed his admiration, and paced over the daisied sward of his own valley with a more lofty step. Nor was there less proud satisfaction in his heart and eye as he conducted his guest to the hall of his fathers, and presented

to him his only sister, bidding her, at the same time, know in Allan Cameron the preserver of her brother's life.

Elizabeth Macpherson rose and stepped blushing forward to receive her young and gallant guest. She was just on the verge of womanhood—that most fascinating period, when the tender and deep sensibilities of the woman begin to give a timid dignity to the liveliness of the girl. The open and rather ardent expression of her happy countenance was sweetly repressed and tempered by the pure veil of maidenly modesty; yet her graceful and commanding stature, the fire of her bright blue eye, and her free and stately step and gesture, told that the spirit of her fathers dwelt strong in the bosom of their lovely daughter. The heart of Allan Cameron bounded and fluttered in his breast, as he advanced to salute this beautiful mountain-nymph. He had braved, undaunted, the brow of man when darkened with the frown of deadly hostility, but he shrank with a new and undefinable tremor before the blushing smile of a youthful maiden's cheek and eye. His self-possession seemed for once to have forsaken him; and had Macpherson been acquainted with the human heart, he must have seen that a new and irresistible feeling was rapidly taking possession of his generous preserver's bosom. He saw in it, however, but the awkwardness of a first interview between two strangers of different sexes; and, in order to relieve Cameron, led him away to see all the beautiful and romantic scenery of the glen, particularly Coir-nan-Taischatrin.

But it was not long ere the graceful person and fascinating manners of Cameron made an impression upon the artless and warm-hearted maiden. At first, her brother's intimate friend, the preserver of his life, had, in her view, just claims to her attention and grateful kindness; but she soon felt that she esteemed, not to say loved him for himself. The preserver of her brother would at all times

have been dear to her; but Allan Cameron woke in her heart a feeling inexpressibly more deep, more tender, more intense.

Art had little influence in directing the conduct of the youthful lovers; and it was not long till they experienced all that heaven of delight which arises in the heart upon being assured of the mutual return of affection. They had, however, kept their love hid from Ewan Macpherson; both because his dark and gloomy manner forbade all approaches to familiar confidence, and because, from the peculiar nature of love, mystery and concealment are necessary to give it its highest zest. Whatever might be the cause, certain it was that Allan Cameron and Elizabeth Macpherson planned the little excursions, which they now frequently made together, in such a manner that they might, as much as possible, avoid being seen by Ewan.

At length, however, the suspicions of the proud chieftain were aroused. It had never entered into his mind that Cameron might, by any possibility, raise his presumptuous hopes so high as to dream of loving the sister of Ewan Macpherson; and no sooner did he suspect the truth, than he dashed from his mind every friendly and grateful feeling towards the man who had saved his life; and saw in Allan Cameron only the hereditary foe of his clan, whose daring insolence had attempted to disgrace the name of Macpherson, by seeking to win the heart of its most loftily descended maiden. Full of resentment at what he deemed so deep an insult, he was ranging the groves and thickets of Glen Feracht in quest of Cameron, like a wolf prowling for his unconscious victim.

The evening sun was at that time throwing his long lines of slanting glory across the summits of the mountains, and lighting the clouds of the west with a radiance too dazzling to be gazed upon, yet too magnificent to permit the eye and the excited soul to wander for a moment from

the contemplation of its celestial splendour. Upon a gentle eminence, whence the castle and the greater part of the glen might be distinctly viewed, stood the lovers. They gazed with silent delight on the beauty and magnificence of the scene around them; yet, amidst their engrossing raptures, they had still enough of individual feeling remaining to be sensible of that warm palpitation of the heart, which, in the presence of a beloved object, so greatly enhances every feeling of delight. On a sudden, they were startled by a rustling noise in the adjoining thicket; and immediately forth bounded Bran, Macpherson's stag-hound, his master's constant attendant.

"My brother must be near," said Elizabeth, in an anxious whisper; "and we shall be discovered. Good Heavens! what shall we do?"

"Perhaps he may not have seen us," replied Cameron: "you can hasten to the castle, and I shall attempt to detain him here till you shall have reached it."

She gave no answer; but, casting around a glance of great alarm, and fixing one tender, anxious look for one moment upon Cameron, she hastened away through secret but well-known paths. She did not, however, escape the eye of Ewan Macpherson, who had thus unseasonably approached the lovers in their retirement. At this discovery, madness swelled in his heart and boiled along his veins; but, suppressing his passion, he approached with haughty stateliness the spot where Cameron stood, apparently fixed in deep and all-engrossing admiration of the glowing beauties of earth and heaven.

"The beauties of animated nature appear to have charms in the tasteful eyes of Allan Cameron," said Macpherson, as he advanced.

"They have," replied Cameron; "and who could stand on this lovely spot and witness so much beauty and magnificence, without feeling a glow of rapture pervade his

whole frame, and chain him to the place in delighted admiration! How happy ought the man to be who can call a place of such loveliness and grandeur his own!"

"Stay! hold! Allan Cameron; let us understand each other. Does Allan Cameron mean to say that these woods and streams of Glen Feracht, the lofty mountains around him, the tints of the evening sky over his head, and these alone, have stirred up his soul to this pitch of enthusiasm? Or must Ewan Macpherson flatter himself that his sister's charms have also had some slight influence in producing these rapturous emotions?"

Uncertain whether Macpherson was in earnest or in jest, Cameron hesitated to answer; and continued gazing on the mountain top, bright, and crimson, and airy, as if it terminated in an edge of flame.

"Dishonour blast the name of Macpherson, if I endure this!" exclaimed the fierce Ewan, bursting into a tumult of fury. "Proud Cameron! dost thou disdain to answer the chief of the Macphersons? Are we fallen so low that a Cameron shall despise us? Speak! answer me! else I strike thee to my foot like a base hound! Hast thou dared to mention love—even to think of love for the sister of Macpherson?"

"And where were the mighty offence, though a Cameron should aspire so high as to love the sister of Macpherson?"

"Where were the offence?—I tell thee, boy, he had better never have seen the light. But I will not trifle with thee. Hast *thou* so dared?"

"I am little used to answer such interrogatious. But I would not willingly quarrel with Ewan Macpherson. My heart must have been colder than it is, could I have enjoyed the company of Elizabeth Macpherson without yielding me to that influence of witching beauty which softens and subdues the soul."

'Thou hast not said—thou dost not dare to say—thou

lovest her! Cameron, I have felt friendship for thee. Thou hast resided in the hall of my fathers. My hand is withheld from thee. But, if thou dost not renounce, at once and for ever, all pretensions to the love of Elizabeth Macpherson, thou hast looked thy last on this green earth and those glorious heavens."

"Renounce all pretensions to the love of Elizabeth Macpherson! I tell thee, proud man, that the daughter of the highest Macpherson might think herself honoured by an alliance with a Cameron."

"Insolent serf! unsay thy words, or maintain them with thy sword!—Crouch, like a low-born slave as thou art, and beg Macpherson's pardon, if thou darest not bare thy coward blade."

"Macpherson, thou didst not call me slave or coward, when, side by side, we two stemmed the stream of battle in its wildest rage;—nor was it a coward blade that hewed out a safe retreat for thee, when thine own arm waxed weak and thy steps were unequal on the field of the slain."

"Thou dost well to speak of what thou knowest will prevent me from chastising thy base treachery. 'Tis what I might have expected;—'tis done like a cowardly Cameron!"

"But that thou hast a sister, Macpherson, that taunt had cost thee dear. Thou knowest that thou speakest falsely."

"Falsely!—defend thee, villain, or die like a slave! The feud of our fathers is but renewed—their spirits behold our strife!" cried Macpherson, and, drawing his claymore, rushed upon Cameron almost before his blade was bared for the combat.

Macpherson, transported to a pitch of frenzy, thought not of artful skill, dreamt not of personal danger. He showered blow on blow with the intemperate fury of a

maniac; all his aim, every effort, being directed to destroy his foe. Cameron, with less bodily strength, was possessed of calm and dauntless courage, superior skill in the use of his weapon, and unmatched personal activity. Unwilling to harm the brother of the object of his affection, he only defended himself, retiring and warding off the furious but aimless blows of Macpherson. The frowning cheek and brow of the baffled chief waxed grimmer with disappointed hate; and, changing his mode of attack, he swept circling round his young and agile antagonist, endeavouring thus to throw him off his guard. Cameron, turning dexterously on his heel, held him still at the sword's point, and allowed him to expend his strength in desperate efforts of fierce but ineffectual violence. During their combat, however, some of Macpherson's *gillies* approached the spot; and Cameron perceived them nearing him with kindling eyes, and holding in their impatient hands the *skean dhu* half unsheathed. He knew that Macpherson was as honourable as brave; and he knew that he might with perfect safety trust his life to the honour of any highlander, under any circumstance where the peculiar honour of his clan was not concerned. But he also knew that no clansman would esteem any deed a crime which should preserve the life or the reputation of his chief. There was, he saw, but one means of saving his life. Collecting all his strength, he beat aside one of Macpherson's furious blows, and bounding upon him as a crouching tiger springs upon his prey, he wrenched his claymore from his hand, dashed him to the earth with the mere violence of the assault; wielding a weapon in either hand, he struck to the ground two of the opposing clansmen, plunged into the thickets as a mountain stag bursts through his covert when the opening pack is near, and disappeared in an instant among the crashing and closing boughs of the underwood. Foaming with disappointed rage, Macpherson sprung from the ground,

snatched a *skean dhu* from one of his prostrated followers, and shouting, "Revenge!" rushed into the thickets in headlong pursuit. In vain. A fleeter foot than that of Allan Cameron never pressed the mountain heath, and, in a short time, he was far beyond all danger from his enraged pursuer; who, after ranging every dell and nook in vain, returned to Castle Feracht, chafing and foaming with impotent rage, and uttering dire but unavailing threats of vengeance.

What would it avail to relate the chieftain's wrath, when he found himself compelled to forego his hopes of sweet revenge, and to endure what he esteemed a new and a more daring insult? Fret and chafe as he might, he knew that his high-souled sister would not be deterred, by threats of personal injury, from following the bent of her own inclination. He therefore assembled his followers in her presence, and caused them all to bind themselves, by a deep oath, to avenge the quarrel of their chief upon Allan Cameron, should he ever dare to set foot within Glen Feracht; enforcing his commands by threats of deadliest vengeance, should any clansman show him favour, hold intelligence with him, or meet him in terms of peace. Elizabeth Macpherson saw his purpose; but she scorned to display her emotion. A flush indeed mantled her brow, and her eye shed one sparkle of indignation—but she remained silent. Fraternal affection was banished the halls of Castle Feracht. An increasing gloom and moodiness of heart began to sink upon the rugged chief; and, at length, to prevent his dark soul's loneliness from becoming altogether insupportable, he began to take an interest in the affairs, first of his own clan, next of the neighbouring clans, and finally of the nation. He thus became acquainted with many a wild and many a wondrous legend, which might otherwise never have reached his observation; and his rather uncultivated mind was not able to resist the encroachments of superstí-

tion. Among others, a firm belief in the reality of the *taisch*, or second-sight, took possession of his mind; and he listened to the many almost incredible relations concerning it, with a wild excitement of spirit. These changes in the manners and pursuits of Macpherson, were, from time to time, reported to Allan Cameron, in spite of the stern threats which had been denounced against all who should hold intercourse with him. A youth, the cho-alt (foster-brother) of Allan Cameron, had repeatedly, under the assumed character of a wandering hunter, entered within the precincts of Glen Feracht, where he was unknown; and, picking up all the information that could be obtained, without awakening suspicion, returned with it to his youthful chief.

Ewan Macpherson was one day informed, by his aged *henchman*, Ranald Glas, that a second-sighted man had arrived in the glen, conducted, according to his own account, by the power of the taisch: that he was extremely old, and his visions were appallingly vivid: his thoughts were terror, and his words were fire. The revelations of things to come passed frequent and powerful across his soul, bright and living as realities; and his language was that of one who constantly held strange communication with scenes and beings not of this world. Though his foot had never before trod the heath of Glen Feracht, he described, with the most perfect accuracy, its castle, stream, and cave; saying that he was come to lay his bones beside those of the ancient seers and holy men who had inhabited Coirnan-Taischatrin. This was enough to rouse the curiosity of Macpherson. Pursuing his inquiries, he learned that the seer had taken up his abode in the cave, and that he had already foretold to some of the clan things, part of which were accomplished, and the rest expected with the utmost confidence. In order to satisfy his curiosity, Macpherson determined to visit the

hoary seer, and learn from himself the nature of his visions.

The shadows of the pine and oak were stretching far across the ravine in the slant evening sunshine, when Ewan Macpherson appeared in front of the cave. His eye could not penetrate the deep darkness within it; and, yielding to a feeling of indescribable awe which crept over his soul, he remained for some time silent and motionless before its entrance. At length he ordered one of his gillies to acquaint the wondrous inmate that Ewan Macpherson wished to hold some converse with him. Forward came the venerable man; and his appearance, in the dimming twilight, had no tendency to diminish the strange delirium of superstitious feelings which had absorbed the whole mind of the bewildered chief. The sage bent one searching glance upon his visitor; and, seeming to have penetrated the state of his mind, advanced into more open view.

A long and squared rod seemed to support his shaking frame as he came forward, tottering and halting at every step. The shaggy hide of an enormous wolf, thrown loosely over his shoulders, served partly to clothe him, partly to disguise his form by the air of savage wildness which a garment so uncouth gave its wearer. From his belt depended some instruments, with the use of which Macpherson was entirely unacquainted; together with a *skean dhu* of exquisite and uncommon workmanship. His bonnet alone was like that of other men; for what could a true highlander substitute for the blue bonnet? but he neither doffed it, nor made any motions of obeisance as he approached. A long white beard flowed half down his bosom, waving heavily and solemnly as he moved. The fire of an intensely bright eye was half hid by his deep, grey, shaggy eyebrows; yet, from beneath that grim penthouse, they emitted occasional sparklings like diamonds in the dark.

"Chief of Macpherson!" said he, in a deep hollow voice,

"man of the dark brow and ruthless hand! what seekest thou with Moran of the Wild?" But, ere Macpherson could reply, the sage cast the wolf hide back from his right shoulder—extended the long square rod in his firmly clenched hand—raised himself up to his full height, while his eyes seemed starting from their sockets, and gleaming like two balls of living fire, and his whole frame agitated, and as if it were dilating with the internal workings of his wild visionary spirit. Macpherson shook and shrunk in his presence.

"They come! they come!" exclaimed the seer—"the wild, the dreadful, the undefinable, the unutterable, the shadowy forms and seemings of things and actions to be! They crowd upon me in powers and numbers unendurable, inconceivable! Words never formed by human breath sound within my heart, and tell of things that mortal tongue may never utter. Eyes, clear, cold, dead, bright, and chill as winter moonshine, look into my soul, and fill it with all their lucid meanings! Oh, scene of blood and woe! when wilt thou end? Thou bright-haired angel, must the doom be thine! Fair lady of the stately brow! oh! let me see no more!" His lips quivered, but he uttered not another word. He remained fixed, rigid, statue-like, as if chilled into stone, bereft of life and motion, by the terrible vision. At length his extended arm dropped by his side; and, heaving a long, shuddering sigh, he leaned his drooping frame upon his rod, trembling and exhausted.

After a considerable pause, Macpherson ventured to address him, with the intention of inquiring into the nature of his vision. "Speak not to me, Ewan Macpherson," said he. "Seek not to know the fate thou wilt and must know all too soon. Thy path through life has been blood-stained and devious. No warnings may now avail thee. But that lady—might she be rescued from misery and horror! Chief! if the safety and happiness of thy father's daughter

be dear to thee, bid her assume the spirit of her race, and come alone to Coir-nan-Taischatrin. Tell her that Moran of the Wild has that to reveal to her which concerns her, and thee, too, deeply. And mark me, Chief! unless thou ceasest to pursue the feuds of thy fathers, thy course will be brief, and bloody will be its close." Thus saying, he turned and feebly dragged his spent and tottering form into the dark and awe-inspiring cave.

Stunned and bewildered, incapable of thought or reflection, and staggering like one who walks in his sleep, Macpherson wandered back towards Castle Feracht. With a strange expression of vague astonishment and hesitation he gazed upon his sister. At length he found words: "Elizabeth Macpherson, if the honour of thy name, if thy own safety and happiness can move thee; if thy brother's life—but that is a trifle—assume the spirit of thy fathers, and go alone to Coir-nan-Taischatrin. Moran of the Wild has that to tell thee which deeply concerns thy safety and happiness. Canst thou execute his desire? He is a fearful man!" At his first words the blood forsook her cheek, and her heart sank within her; but, ere he ceased speaking, a wild surmise flashed gleaming across her soul.

"Brother!" replied she, "the daughter of Angus Macpherson dare go alone to Coir-nan-Taischatrin, and hear whatever the sage may have to tell. Fear not for me. Do not, by impatience or needless anxiety for my safety, rashly interrupt our interview. Ere long, you shall know what warnings or what information the seer has to impart." Then, with a stately and determined step, and an eye kindled with an ambiguous expression of ardent hope or daring resolution, she bent her way to the dreaded cave.

The fearless maiden approached the cave. She spoke; but the voice that answered was that of Allan Cameron. The wolf's hide was soon thrown aside, and he stood before her in the graceful garb of a mountain warrior; his noble

countenance beaming with courage and triumphant love. Taking advantage of the time which Macpherson would delay at the castle, awaiting the expiration of their interview, they hastily fled from the hostile glen, and soon reached a concealment where the faithful cho-alt had horses prepared for their escape. Words would be feeble to express the fury of Ewan Macpherson when, after waiting till his patience was exhausted, he explored the cave, and found that he had been deceived, and that by the man whom he had begun to consider as his deadliest foe. He determined to take fearful vengeance upon Cameron, and all of his clan whom he might be able to overpower. Before he could get his purpose put in execution, he chanced to meet a small party of the Gordons; when, forgetting every other thought but that of his burning desire of vengeance on those who slew his father, he rushed upon them; and, bursting into the midst of them, was assailed on all sides, and wounded so severely that, though he was rescued by his own followers, and was completely victorious, he died ere he could be brought back to Castle Feracht. Dying unmarried, his estate and power passed to his sister, and from her to one of her younger sons, upon his dropping the name of Cameron, and retaining that of Macpherson alone. An amicable termination was thus put to the feud between the two families. A descendant from this auspicious union still resides in Castle Feracht, and occasionally relates, with considerable pleasure, the tradition of Coir-nan-Taischatrin.

THE LAIDLEY WORM OF SPINDLESTON HEUGH.

A TALE OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

"Word went east, and word went west,
And word is gone over the sea,
That a Laidley Worm in Spindleston Heugh
Would ruin the north countrie.

"All folks believe within the shire
This story to be true,
And they all run to Spindleston
The cave and trough to view.

"This fact now Duncan Frazier,
Of Cheviot, sings in rhyme,
Lest Bamboroughshire-men should forget
Some part of it in time."—*Ancient Ballad.**

"TELL me, old man," said a Northumbrian chief to a Saxon bard who claimed his hospitality, "tell me a tale of the olden time—a legend of the race of Woden."

The bard bowed his head and began :—Great was Ida, the flame-bearer, above all the kings of the isles. His ships covered the sea in shoals, and his warriors that launched them on the deep were stronger than its waves. He built the towers of Bamborough on the mighty rock whose shadow darkens the waters. He reared it as a habi-

* The popular Ballad of the Laidley (or loathly) Worm of Spindleston Heugh, was composed by Duncan Frazier, the Cheviot bard, more than five hundred years ago, and had rendered the legend familiar far beyond the Borders. The tradition has doubtless been commemorated by the ancient Saxon bards, when old Duncan turned it into rhyme; and it is under this supposition that the present tale is told, the narrator being understood to be a wandering bard of the Saxon race.

tation for his queen, and he called it by her name.* Wheresoever he went, strong places were consumed, kings were overthrown and became his servants, and nations became one. But Ida, in the midst of his conquests, fell in battle, by the red sword of Owen, the avenging Briton. Then followed six kings who reigned over Bernicia, from the southern Tyne even to the Frith of Dun Edin. But the duration of their sovereignty was as a summer cloud or morning dew. Their reigns were as six spans from an infant's hand, and peaceful as an infant's slumber.

But to them succeeded Ethelfrith the Fierce—the grandson of Ida—the descendant of the immortal Woden. His voice, when his ire was kindled, was like the sound of deep thunder, and his vengeance fleeter than the lightning. He overthrew princes as reeds, and he swept armies before him as stubble. His conquests extended from where clouds sleep on the brow of Cheviot, to where the heights of terrific Snowdon pierce heaven. Men trembled at his name; for he was as a wolf in the fold, as an eagle among the lesser birds of heaven.

Now, the wife of Ethelfrith's bosom died; she departed to the place of spirits—to the company of her fathers. She left behind her a daughter, Agitha,† with the tresses of the raven's wing; and she was beautiful as sunbeams sparkling from morning dew amongst the flowers of spring. Her eyes were bright as the falcon's, but with their brightness was mingled the meekness of the dove's. The breath of sixteen summers had fanned her cheeks. Her bosom was white as the snow that lay in winter on the hills, and soft as the plumage of the sea-fowl that soared over the rocks of her lofty dwelling.

A hundred princes sighed for the hand of the bright-

* According to the venerable Bede, the name of Ida's queen was Bidda, and the original name of Bamborough, Biddaburgh.

† In the old ballad she is called Margaret.

haired Agitha; but their tales of love had no music for her ear, and they jarred upon her soul as the sounds of a broken instrument. She bent her ear only to listen to the song of affection from the lips of the Chylde Wynde—even to Chylde Wynde of the sharp sword and the unerring bow, who was her own kinsman, the son of her father's brother. His voice was to her as the music of water brooks to the weary and fainting traveller—dear as the shout of triumph to a conquering king. Great was the Chylde Wynde among the heroes of Bernicia. He had honoured the shield of his father. He had rendered his sword terrible. Where the battle raged fiercest, there was his voice heard, there was his sword seen; war-horses and their riders fell before it—it arrested the fury of the chariots of war. Bards recorded his deeds in immortal strains, and Agitha sang them in secret.

Yet would not Ethelfrith listen to the prayer of his kinsman, but his anger was kindled against him. The fierce king loved his daughter, but he loved dominion more. It was dearer to him than the light of heaven, than the face of the blessed sun. He waded through blood as water, even the blood of his victims, to set his feet upon thrones. He said unto himself—"Agitha is beautiful—she is fairer than her mother was. She is stately as a pine, lifting its head above the sacred oaks. She is lovely as the moon when it blesseth the harvest fields. A king only shall possess her hand, and give a kingdom in exchange for it."

Thus spoke her father, the mighty Ethelfrith, whose word was power, and whose purpose was fixed as the everlasting rocks on which the foundations of the earth are built. He said, therefore, unto the Chylde Wynde—"Strong art thou in battle, son of my brother; the mighty bend before thy spear, and thy javelins pierce through the shields of our enemies. As an eagle descendeth on its prey, so rusheth my kinsman to the onset. But thou hast

no nation to serve thee—no throne to offer for my daughter's hand. Whoso calleth himself her husband, shall for that title exchange the name of king, and become tributary unto me—even as my sword, before which thrones shake and nations tremble, has caused others to do homage. Go, therefore, son of my brother, take with thee ships and warriors, and seek thee a people to conquer. Go, find a land to possess; and when with thy sword and with thy bow thou hast done this, return ye to me, bringing a crown in thy left hand, and in thy right will I place the hand of Agitha with the bright hair, whose eyes are as stars."

"O king!" answered the Chylde—"thou who holdest the fate of princes in thy hands, and the shadow of whose sceptre stretcheth over many nations—the uplifting of whose arm turneth the tide of battle—swear unto me, by the spirit of mighty Woden, that while I am doing that which thou requirest, and ere I can return to lay a crown at thy feet, swear that thou will not bless another king, for an offered kingdom, with the hand of Agitha, in whom my soul liveth!"

Then did the wrath of the king wax terrible; his eyes were as consuming fires, even as the fire of heaven when it darteth from the dark clouds of midnight. His countenance was fierce as the sea, when its waves boil and are lifted up with the tempest. In his wrath he dashed his heel upon the floor; and the armour of conquered kings, the spoils of a hundred battles, rang round the halls of Ida.

"Shall the blood of my brother," he cried "stain the floor of his father? Boy! ask ye an oath from a king, the descendant of Woden?* Away! do as I command thee, lest ye perish!"

* It may be necessary to mention, that the imaginary deities of the Saxons were named Woden, Tuisco, Thor, Frea, and Seator. They also worshipped the sun and moon. Woden was their god of war; and from him Ida and his descend-

Then did the Chylde Wynde withdraw from before the anger of the great king, in the presence of whom, in his wrath, the life even of his kindred was as a spider's thread. He sought Agitha with the rainbow smile, where she sat with her maidens, in the groves of Budle, ornamenting a robe of skins for her father, the mighty Ethelfrith. The sea sang its anthem of power along the shore, and the caves of the rocks resounded with the chorus of the eternal hymn. The farthest branches of the grove bent over the cliff that overhung the sounding sea. The birds of heaven sang over her head, and before her the sea-birds wheeled in myriads, countless as the sand upon the shore, like burnished clouds over the adjacent isles. Their bright wings flashed in the sun, like the fitful fires that light the northern heavens.

The warrior Chylde drew near where the princess sat. There was gloom and sorrow on his brow. The echoes of the grove answered to his sighs. Agitha heard them. She beheld the cloud of anguish that was before his countenance. The robe of skins dropped from her hand. Her eyes, that were as the morning light, became dim. She arose and went forward to meet him.

"Wherefore," she inquired, "does my hero sigh, and why sits heaviness on the brightness of his face? Art not thou renowned in song as the warrior of the dauntless heart and the resistless sword? Art not thou the envy of princes—the beloved of the people—the admired by the daughters of kings? And can sadness dwell upon thy soul? Oh! thou who art as the plume of my father's warriors, and as the pride of his host, if grief hath entered into thy bosom, let it be buried in mine."

Then thus replied the warrior Chylde:—"Agitha—thou

ants professed to spring. We need hardly add that it is after these objects of pagan worship that we still name the days of the week; as Woden's day (Wednesday), Thor's day (Thursday), Frea's day (Friday), &c. &c.

that art fairer, milder than the light that plays around the brows of the summer moon, and dearer to me than a mother's milk to the lips of her babe—it is for thee that my countenance is sad, and my soul troubled. For thy father has pierced my spirit with many arrows; yea, even with the poisoned arrows of a deadly foe. He hath wrung my soul for thee, Agitha. Thou didst give me thy heart when the sacred moon rose over the rocky Ferns and beheld us; and while the ministering spirits that dwell in its beams descended as a shower of burning gold upon the sea, and, stretching to the shore, heard us. We exchanged our vows beneath the light of the hallowed orb, while the stars of heaven hid their faces before it. Then, Agitha, while its beams glowed on my father's sword, upon that sword I swore to love thee. But our vows are vain. Daughter of kings! our love is sorrow. Thy father hath vowed, by the mighty Woden, that thou shalt be the wife of a king, and that a kingdom shall be the price of thy hand. Yet will I gather my warriors together. They number a thousand spears; they have a thousand bows. The charge of their spears is as the rushing of the whirlwind. The flight of their arrows hides the face of the sun. Foes perish at their approach. Victory goeth before their face. Therefore will I go forth into a far country. I will make war upon a strange people, that I may take the kingdom from their ruler, and present his crown unto thy father for the hand of my Agitha."

The maiden wept. Her head sank on her bosom like a fair flower weighed down with dew. Tears stood in the eyes of the warrior.

"Weep not, daughter of heroes!" he said; "the tide of battle is in the hands of Woden. He will not turn it against a descendant of his race. I will return to thee in triumph. I will throw a crown at thy father's feet, and rush to the arms of Agitha. Thou wilt greet me again with thy smile

of love—with thy voice that is sweeter than the music of spring. Thy heart, which is dearer than life, shall be my kingdom; and thy bosom, that is whiter than the breast of the wild swan, my throne. I will fly to thee as the hunted deer to its covert—as a bird to its nest where its young await it."

Thus departed the warrior, and Agitha returned to her maidens; she sat down amongst them and mourned.

Gormack, the weird, a thane of the Pictish race, had his dwelling near the giddy cliffs where the young eagles scream to the roar of the dark waters of the Forth. He had a daughter whose beauty was the theme of all tongues. Her fame went over the land like the sound of shells—yea, like the sound of shells when the wind is hushed, and the moon is bright in the heavens. Fair was the daughter of Gormack as the lily that groweth by the brook. Her hair was as the finest fleece when it is purified. It fell down her back in ringlets. It was bright as the golden clouds that encircle the throne of the rising sun—as the golden clouds when they are dipped in silver. Her father held counsel with spirits of evil. They were obedient to his will. He invoked them to endue his daughter with more than mortal beauty, that she might inflame the soul of princes, and sit upon their throne. Such was the tale of men. Her beauty was the burden of the song of bards. In their chorus to swell the praise of others, they said that they were "lovely as the fair daughter of Gormack."

The tale of her charms was heard by Ethelfrith. It was heard by the fierce in war—the impetuous in love—the victor in battle—yea, even by Ethelfrith, king of Bernicia. "I will see the fair daughter of the thane," said the proud king, to whose will even war and the mighty in war did homage. Moreover, Gormack the thane was his vassal. He had sworn to his obedience.

The king went forth to the dwelling of Gormack, among

the cliffs. Ealdormen,* comites,† and thanes,‡ attended him. The weird thane came forth to meet him; he bowed his head and made obeisance.

Ethelfrith beheld Bethoc the Beautiful; and the songs that he had heard in her praise were as an idle tale, for her loveliness exceeded the power of song. The soul of the fierce king melted within him. It was subdued by the sorcery of her charms.

"Give me," said he unto her father—and commandments ever fell from his lips—"give me Bethoc to be my wife; for she is more lovely than the morning star. She is fit for a warrior's bride; she shall be THE LADY§ of Bernicia."

Again the weird bowed his head. He knelt upon his knee. He presented his daughter to the king. Then did Ethelfrith take her by the hand. He led her forth to his chariot of war, through the midst of his ealdormen, his comites, and his thanes, who were in great power and resistless in war, and they made obeisance to her as she passed through the midst of them. They saluted her as their queen. Her breast swelled with exultation. Pride flashed from her eyes, as the sun bursting from a cloud dazzleth the eye of the gazer. The king gazed upon her beauty as a dreamer upon a fair vision.

Now, the beauty of Bethoc was sin made lovely. Her bosom was as a hill where the vine and the cedar grew, and where flowers shed forth perfume; but beneath which a volcano slept. To the eye was beauty, beyond were desolation and death. Pride, hatred, and envy, encircled her soul. She was sold unto evil, even as her father was. The spirit of destruction, in answer to her father's prayer, had formed

* Earls. † Companions.

‡ Thanes signified men high in power, of various degrees of rank.

§ THE LADY was the appellation given to a queen amongst the Anglo-Saxons.

her a beautiful destroyer. Whatsoever was lovely that she looked upon in envy, withered as though an east wind passed over it—the destroying wind which blighteth the hopes of the husbandman.

At the going down of the sun, the king, and his fair queen, Bethoc, with his mighty men, drew near to the tower which Ida had built on the mountain-rock, and all the people of the city came forth to meet him, and to greet their queen.

The bards lifted up their voice; they styled her the fairest of women.

"Fair is the wife of the king," replied an aged thane, "but fairer is Agitha, his daughter! Bethoc, the queen, is a bright star, but Agitha is the star of the morning—fairest of the heavens!"

Queen Bethoc heard the words of the aged thane, and she hated Agitha because of them. The spirit of evil spread his darkness over her soul. He filled her breast with the poison of asps, her eyes with the venom of the adder that lures to destruction.

At the entrance of the tower of kings stood Agitha, lovely as the spirits that dwell among the stars, and give beauty to the beings of earth. She knelt before the queen. She offered her a daughter's homage.

"Rise, beautiful one! inspirer of song!" said the queen; "kneel not to me, for I am but a star—thou art the star of the morning. Hide not thy face from before men. Let them serve and worship thee."

Cold were her words as water which droppeth from the everlasting icicles in the caves of the north. As is the mercy of the tears of the crocodile, so was the kindness of her looks. Envy and hatred gleamed in her eyes, like lightnings round the sides of a dark cloud.

The countenance of Agitha fell; for she knew that her father in his wrath was fiercer than the wild boar of the

forest when at bay; and she feared to reply to the sneer of the wife in whom his eyes delighted.

Queen Bethoc, the daughter of Gormack, knew that men said she was less beautiful than Agitha, the daughter of the king. When they walked by the clear fountains or the crystal brooks together, the fountains and the brooks whispered to her the words which men spoke—"Agitha is the most lovely." Therefore did the queen hate Agitha with a great and deadly hatred. As the sleuth-hound seeketh its prey, so did she seek her destruction. As the fowler lureth the bird into his net, so did she lie in wait for her. Yet she feared to destroy her openly, because that she was afraid of the fierce anger of her husband Ethelfrith, and his love for his daughter was great.

Sleep fled from her eyes, and colour forsook her cheeks, because of her envy of the beauty of Agitha, and the hatred which she bore her. She spoke unto her father Gormack, the weird thane, that he would aid her with his sorceries against her. Then did they practise their unclean spells, and perform their dark incantations to destroy her; but their spells and incantations prevailed not, for the spirit of Woden protected Agitha.

Now, there resided at that time in a dark cave, in the heugh which is called Spindleston, an enchantress of great power, named Elgiva—the worker of wonders. Men said that she could weave ropes of sand, and threads from the motes of the sunbeams. She could call down fire from the clouds, and transform all things by the waving of her magic wand. Around her hung a loose robe, composed of the skins of many beasts. Her feet and her arms were bare, and they were painted with strange figures. On her face, also, was the likeness of the spirits that ministered to her will. She was fearful to look upon. Men fled at her approach. The beasts of the field were scared by her shadow. Round her head was wreathed a crown of fantastic hemlock

—round her neck a corslet of deadly nightshade. On her left arm coiled a living snake, and it rested its head upon her bosom. In her right hand she held a wand dipped in the poison of all things venomous. Whatsoever it touched died—whatsoever it waved over was transformed. No human foot approached her cave—no mortal dared. The warrior, who feared not a hundred foes, quailed at the sight of Elgiva, the enchantress, the worker of wonders. Unclean reptiles crawled around her cave—the asp, the loathsome toad, and the hissing adder. Two owls sat in the farthest corner of the cave, and their eyes were as lamps in its darkness. They sat upon skulls of the dead. A tame raven croaked in the midst of it. It was told that the reptiles, the owls, and the raven, were objects of her enchantment—warriors, and the daughters of warriors, transformed by the waving of her wand.

Now, when Bethoc could find no rest because of the greatness of her hatred for Agitha, and, moreover, as she herself had communed with impure spirits, she overcame the terror which the name of Elgiva spread. She sought her aid. In the dead of night, when the moon had gone to rest, yea, when clouds and darkness had blotted out the stars that were left to watch in the heavens, she went forth from the tower of kings. She stood before the cave of the enchantress. She lifted up her voice and cried—"Elgiva—worker of wonders! the feared of mortals—come forth!"

The owls clapped their wings and screamed; the ravens croaked, and the adders hissed. From the darkness of her cave the voice of the enchantress came forth—it came forth as a voice from the grave, saying—"Who amongst the children of mortals dareth to call upon the name of Elgiva?—or, what deed of sin bringeth thee hither?"

"The queen," answered Bethoc, "the wife of the mighty Ethelfrith, she calleth thee, she invoketh thine aid. The

strongest spirits obey thee—the spirits of the earth, of the air, and of the sea. Then help me, thou that art more powerful than the kings of the earth, that art stronger than the fate of the stars; help—rid me of mine enemy whom I hate, even of Agitha, the daughter of the king. Make her as one of the poisoned worms that crawl within thy cave. Or, if thou wilt not do this thing to serve me, when my right hand hath shed her blood, turn from me the fierce wrath of her father the king."

Again the voice of the enchantress came forth from the cave, saying—"In seven days come unto me again—bring with thee the Princess Agitha; and Elgiva, the enchantress, will do towards her as Bethoc, the daughter of the weird thane, hath requested."

Thus did the queen, while Ethelfrith, her lord, was making war against a strange king in a far country.

Darkness lay heavy on the hills, it concealed the objects on the plains. The seven days, of which the enchantress had spoken, were expired.

"Maiden," said the queen unto Agitha, "rise and follow me."

Agitha obeyed; for the fear and the commandment of her father were upon her. Two servants, men of the Pictish race, also followed the queen. She went towards the cave of the enchantress. Agitha would have shrunk back, but the queen grasped her hand. The swords of the men of the Pictish race waved over her. They dragged her forward. They stood before the cave of the potent Elgiva.

"Elgiva! worker of wonders!" exclaimed the queen; "Bethoc, thy servant, is come. The victim also is here—Agitha, the morning-star. By thy power, which is stronger than the lightning, and invisible as the wind, render loathsome her beauty; yea, make her as a vile worm which crawleth on the ground, with venom in its mouth."

Again was heard the deep voice of the enchantress, mingled with the croaking of the raven, and the screeching of the owls, as she rushed from her cave, crying—"It shall be as thou hast said."

Terror had entranced the soul of the fair Agitha—it had brought a sleep over her senses. The enchantress grasped her hand. She threw her arm around her.

"Away, accursed!" she exclaimed unto Bethoc the queen; "fly! lest the power of the enchantment fall upon thee also. Fly! lest it overtake thee as darkness overtaketh the benighted traveller. Fly! ere the wand of the worker of wonders is uplifted, and destruction come upon thee."

The followers of Bethoc quaked with dismay. They turned with her and fled to the tower of Ida. Of their outgoing and their incoming none knew.

The maidens of Bernicia wept when the loss of Agitha was known. "Beauty," said they, "hath perished. Agitha, whose face was as the face of heaven when its glories appear—as the face of the earth when its flowers give forth their fragrance—Agitha is not!" And because she was not, the people mourned. Queen Bethoc alone rejoiced, and was silent.

Dismay and wonder spread over the land—for a tale was told of a serpent-worm, fearful in magnitude and of monstrous form, which was seen at Spindleston, by the cave of Elgiva—the worker of wonders—the woman of power.

The people trembled. They said of the monster—"It is Agitha, the beloved!—the daughter of our king, of conquering Ethelfrith. Elgiva, the daughter of destruction, who communeth with the spirits of the air, and defeateth armies by the waving of her wand, hath done this. She hath cast her enchantments over Agitha, the fairest of women—the meekest among the daughters of princes."

The bards raised songs of lamentation for her fate.

"Surely," said they, "when the Chylde Wynde cometh, his sword, which maketh the brave to fall and bringeth down the mighty, will break the enchantment." And the burden of the songs was—"Return, O valiant Chylde, conqueror of nations—thou who makest kings captives, return! Free the enchanted! Deliver the beautiful!"

Now, the people of the land where the Chylde and his warriors landed, were stricken with terror at their approach. They fled before them, as sheep fly upon the hills when the howl of the hungry wolf is heard. He overthrew their king, he took possession of his kingdom. He took his crown, and he brought it to Ethelfrith, whose ambition was boundless as the sea. He brought it as the price of Agitha's hand.

It was morn. The sun rose with his robes of glory over the sea. Bethoc, the daughter of Gormack the weird, stood upon the turrets of Ida's tower. She was performing incantations to the four winds of heaven. She called upon them to lift up the sea on their invisible wings, to raise its waves as mountains, and whelm the ships upon its bosom. But the winds obeyed not her voice, and the sea was still. In the bay of Budle lay the vessels of the Chylde Wynde, and the weapons of his warriors flashed in the sunbeams and upon the sea. Therefore was the spirit of Queen Bethoc troubled. It was troubled lest the enchantment should be broken—Agitha delivered from the spell, and her wrongs avenged.

As a great wave rolleth in majesty to the shore, so advanced the warrior ships of Chylde Wynde, the subduer of heroes. The people came forth to meet him with a shout of joy. "He is come," they cried; "the favoured of the stars, the Chylde of the sharp sword, is come to deliver Agitha the beautiful, to break the spell of her enchantment."

He heard the dark tale. His bosom heaved. He rent

the robe that covered him. His grief was as the howling of the winter wind, in a deep glen between great mountains. He threw himself upon the earth and wept.

But again the spirit of Woden came upon him. It burned within his bosom as a fierce flame. He started to his feet. To his lips he pressed the sword of his father. He vowed to break the enchantment that entombed his betrothed.

He rushed towards the cave of Elgiva, the worker of wonders. His warriors feared to follow him. The people stood back in dismay. For by the waving of Elgiva's wand she turned the swords of warriors upon themselves; she caused them to melt in their hands.

At the mouth of her cave stood the enchantress. By her side lay the serpent-worm.

"Daughter of wickedness!" shouted the Chylde, "break thy accursed spell; restore the fair form of my Agitha, else the blood of thy heart shall dissolve the charm."

"Hearken, O Chylde," cried the enchantress; "thou subduer of kings, thou vanquisher of the strong—sharp is thy sword, but against me it hath no power. Would it pierce the breast that suckled thee?—the breast of her that bore thee?"

From the hand of the warrior dropped his uplifted sword.

"Mother!" he exclaimed. He fell on his knees before her.

"Yea, thy mother," answered the enchantress; "who, when her warrior husband fell, fled to the desert, to the cave, and to the forest, for protection—even for protection from the love and from the wrath of Ethelfrith the fierce, the brother of thy warrior father, whose eyes were as the eagle's, and his arm great of strength. Uncouth is the habit, wild is the figure, and idle the art of thy mother. Broken is her wand which the vulgar feared. That mine

eyes might behold my son, this cave became my abode. Superstition walled it round with fire."

"And Agitha?" gasped the warrior.

"Behold!" answered she, "the loathly worm at the feet of thy mother."

The skins of fish of the deep sea were sewed together with cords—they were fashioned into the form of a great serpent.

"Come forth, my daughter!" cried the enchantress. Agitha sprang from her disguise of skins. She sank on the breast of our hero.

The people beheld her from afar. Their shout of joy rang across the sea. It was echoed among the hills. A scream rose from the tower of Ida. From the highest turret Bethoc the queen had sprung. In pieces was her body scattered at the foot of the great cliff. They were gathered together—they were buried in the cave of Elgiva. From her grave crawled an unclean beast, and it crawleth around it for ever.

Ethelfrith died in battle. Woden shut his eyes and saw him not, and he fell. And Elgiva, the enchantress, the worker of wonders, was hailed as Rowena, the mother of Wynde, the subduer of princes; yea, even of Chylde Wynde, the beloved, and the lord of Agitha the Beautiful.

Such was the tale of the Saxon bard.

THE SABBATH WRECKS.

A LEGEND OF DUNBAR.

It was a beautiful Sabbath morning in the autumn of 1577: a few small clouds, tinged with red, sailed slowly through the blue heavens; the sun shone brightly, as if conscious of the glory and goodness of its Maker, diffusing around a holy stillness and tranquillity, characteristic of the day of rest; the majestic Frith flashed back the sunbeams, while, on its bosom, slowly glided the winged granaries of commerce; there, too, lay its islands, glorying in their strength—the May, shrouded in light, appeared as a leviathan sunning in its rays—and the giant Bass, covered with seafowl, rose as a proud mountain of alabaster in the midst of the waters. A thousand boats lay along the shores of Dunbar. It was the herring season—and there were many boats from the south and from the north, and also from the coast of Holland.

Now, tidings were brought to the fishermen that an immense shoal was upon the coast; and, regardless of its being Sabbath morning, they began to prepare their thousand boats, and to go out to set their nets. The Rev. Andrew Simpson, a man possessed of the piety and boldness of an apostle, was then minister of Dunbar; and, as he went forth to the kirk to preach to his people, he beheld the unhallowed preparations of the fishermen on the beach; and he turned and went amongst them, and reproved them sternly for their great wickedness. But the men were obdurate—the prospect of great gain was before them, and they mocked the words of the preacher. Yea, some of them said unto him, in the words of the children to the

prophet—"Go up, thou bald head." He went from boat to boat, counselling, entreating, expostulating with them, and praying for them.

"Surely," said he, "the Lord of the Sabbath will not hold ye guiltless for this profanation of his holy day." But, at that period, vital religion was but little felt or understood upon the Borders, and they regarded not his words.

He went to one boat, which was the property of members of his own congregation, and there he found Agnes Crawford, the daughter of one of his elders, hanging upon the neck of her husband, and their three children also clung around him, and they entreated him not to be guilty of breaking the Sabbath for the sake of perishing gain. But he regarded not their voice; and he kissed his wife and his children, while he laughed at their idle fears. Mr. Simpson beheld the scene with emotion, and approaching the group—"John Crawford," he exclaimed, addressing the husband, "you may profess to mock, to laugh to scorn the words of a feeble woman; but see that they return not like a consuming fire into your bosom when hope has departed. Is not the Lord of the Sabbath the Creator of the sea as well as of the dry land? Know ye not that ye are now braving the wrath of him before whom the mighty ocean is a drop, and all space but a span? Will ye, then, glory in insulting his ordinances, and delight in profaning the day of holiness? Will ye draw down everlasting darkness on the Sabbath of your soul? When ye were but a youth, ye have listened to the words of John Knox—the great apostle of our country—ye have trembled beneath their power, and the conviction that they carried with them; and when ye think of those convictions, and contrast them with your conduct this day, does not the word *apostate* burn in your heart? John Crawford, some of your blood have embraced the stake for the sake of the truth, and will ye profane the Sabbath which they sancti-

fied? The Scotsman who openly glories in such a sin, forfeits his claim to the name of one, and publishes to the world that he has no part nor communion with the land that gave him birth. John Crawford, hearken unto my voice, to the voice of your wife, and that of your bairns (whose bringing up is a credit to their mother), and be not guilty of this gross sin." But the fisherman, while he regarded not the supplications of his wife, became sullen at the words of the preacher; and, springing into the boat, seized an oar, and, with his comrades, began to pull from the shore.

The thousand boats put to sea, and Mr. Simpson returned sorrowful from the beach to the kirk, while Agnes Crawford and her children followed him. That day he took for his text, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" and, as he fearlessly and fervidly denounced the crime of Sabbath-breaking, and alluded to the impious proceedings of the day, his hearers trembled, but poor Agnes wept aloud, and her children clung around her, and they wept also, because she wept. But, ere the service had concluded, the heavens began to lower. Darkness fell over the congregation—and first came the murmur of the storm, which suddenly burst into the wild howl of the tempest. They gazed upon each other in silent terror, like guilty spirits stricken in their first rebellion by the searching glance of the Omniscient. The loud voice of psalms was abruptly hushed, and its echo mingled with the dreadful music of the elements, like the bleating of a tender lamb, in the wind that sweepeth howling on the mountains. For a moment, their features, convulsed and immovable, were still distended with the song of praise; but every tongue was silent, every eye fixed. There was no voice, save heaven's. The church seemed to rock to its foundations, but none fled—none moved. Pale, powerless as marble statues, horror transfixed them in the house of prayer.

The steeple rocked in the blast, and, as it bent, a knell, untolled by human hands, pealed on the ears of the breathless multitude. A crash followed. The spire that glittered in the morning sun lay scattered in fragments, and the full voice of the whirlwind roared through the aisles. The trees crouched, and were stripped leafless; and the sturdy oak, whose roots had embraced the earth for centuries, torn from the deep darkness of its foundations, was uplifted on the wings of the tempest. Darkness was spread over the earth. Lightnings gathered together their terrors, and, clothed in the fury of their fearful majesty, flashed through the air. The fierce hail was poured down as clouds of ice. At the awful voice of the deep thunder, the whirlwind quailed, and the rage of the tempest seemed spent.

Nothing was now heard save the rage of the troubled sea, which, lashed into foam by the angry storm, still bellowed forth its white billows to the clouds, and shouted its defiance loud as the war-cry of embattled worlds. The congregation still sat mute, horrified, death-like, as if waiting for the preacher to break the spell of the elements. He rose to return thanks for their preservation, and he had given out the lines—

> "Lord, in thy wrath rebuke me not,
> Nor in thy hot rage chasten me,"

when the screams and the howling of women and children rushing wildly along the streets, rendered his voice inaudible. The congregation rose, and hurrying one upon another, they rushed from the church. The exhortations of the preacher to depart calmly were unheard and unheeded. Every seat was deserted, all rushed to the shore, and Agnes Crawford and her children ran, also, in terror, with the multitude.

The wrecks of nearly two hundred boats were drifting among the rocks. The dead were strewed along the beach,

and amongst them, wailing widows sought their husbands, children their fathers, mothers their sons, and all their kindred; and ever and anon an additional scream of grief arose, as the lifeless body of one or other such relation was found. A few of the lifeless bodies of the hardy crews were seen tossing to and fro; but the cry for help was hushed, and the yell of death was heard no more.

It was, in truth, a fearful day—a day of lamentation, of warning, and of judgment. In one hour, and within sight of the beach, a hundred and ninety boats and their crews were whelmed in the mighty deep; and, dwelling on the shore between Spittal and North Berwick, two hundred and eighty widows wept their husbands lost.

The spectators were busied carrying the dead, as they were driven on shore, beyond the reach of tide-mark. They had continued their melancholy task for near an hour, when a voice exclaimed—"See! see!—one still lives, and struggles to make the shore!"

All rushed to the spot from whence the voice proceeded, and a young man was perceived, with more than mortal strength, yet labouring in the whirling waves. His countenance was black with despair. His heart panted with suffocating pangs. His limbs buffeted the billows in the strong agony of death, and he strained, with desperate eagerness, towards the projecting point of a black rock. It was now within his grasp, but, in its stead, he clutched the deceitful wave that laughed at his deliverance. He was whirled around it, dashed on it with violence, and again swept back by the relentless surge. He threw out his arms at random, and his deep groans and panting breath were heard through the sea's hoarse voice. He again reached the rock—he grasped, he clung to its tangled sides. A murmur moaned through the multitude. They gazed one upon another. His glazed eyes frowned darkly upon them. Supplication and scorn were mingled in his look.

His lips moved, but his tongue uttered no sound. He only gasped to speak—to implore assistance. His strength gave way—the waters rushed around the rock as a whirlpool. He was again uplifted upon the white bosom of the foam, and tossed within a few yards of the wailing but unavailing crowd.

"It is John Crawford!" exclaimed those who were enabled to recognise his features. A loud shriek followed the mention of his name—a female rushed through the crowd, and the next moment the delicate form of Agnes Crawford was seen floating on the wild sea. In an instant, a hundred plunged to her rescue; but, before the scream of horror and surprise raised by the spectators when they beheld her devoted but desperate purpose, had subsided, she was beyond the reach of all who feared death. Although no feminine amusement, Agnes, from a child, had delighted in buffeting the waters as though she felt at home upon their bosom; and now the strength of inspiration seemed to thrill through her frame. She was hidden from the gaze of the marvelling spectators, and a deep groan crept along the shore. She again appeared, and her fair hand grasped the shoulder of the drowning man! A shout of wild joy rang back on the deserted town. Her father, who was amongst the multitude, fell upon his knees. He clasped his hands together—"Merciful Heaven!" he exclaimed, "Thou who stillest the tempest, and holdest the waters in the hollow of thy hand, protect—protect my child!"

The waters rioted with redoubled fury. Her strength seemed failing, but a smile of hope still lighted up her features, and her hand yet grasped her apparently lifeless burden. Despair again brooded on the countenances of her friends. For a moment, she disappeared amongst the waves; but the next, Agnes Crawford lay senseless on the beach, her arm resting on the bosom of him she had

snatched from a watery grave—on the bosom of her husband.

They were borne to their own house, where, in a few minutes, she recovered; but her husband manifested no sign of vitality. All the means within their power, and that they knew, were resorted to, in order to effect his resuscitation. Long and anxiously she wept over him, rubbing his temples and his bosom, and, at length, beneath her hand his breast first began to heave with the returning pulsation of his heart.

"He lives!—he breathes!" she exclaimed; and she sank back in a state of unconsciousness, and was carried from the room. The preacher attended by the bedside, where the unconscious fisherman lay, directing and assisting in the operations necessary for restoring animation.

In a few hours the fisherman awoke from his troubled sleep, which many expected would have been the sleep of death. He raised himself in the bed—he looked around wistfully. Agnes, who had recovered, and returned to the room, fell upon his bosom. "My Agnes!—my poor Agnes!" he cried, gazing wistfully in her face—"but, where—where am I?—and my bairnies, where are they?"

"Here, faither, here!" cried the children, stretching out their little arms to embrace him.

Again he looked anxiously around. A recollection of the past, and a consciousness of the present, fell upon his mind. "Thank God!" he exclaimed, and burst into tears; and when his troubled soul and his agitated bosom had found in them relief, he inquired, eagerly—"But, oh, tell me, how was I saved?

"John," said the aged elder, the father of Agnes, "ye was saved by the merciful and sustaining power o' that Providence which ye this morning set at nought. But I rejoice to find that your heart is not hardened, and that the awful visitation which has this day filled our coast

with widows and with orphans, has not fallen upon you in vain; for ye acknowledge your guilt, and are grateful for your deliverance. Your being saved is naething short o' a miracle. We a' beheld how long and how desperately ye struggled wi' the raging waves. A scream burst upon my ear—a woman rushed through the crowd—and then, John!—oh, then!"——But here the feelings of the old man overpowered him. He sobbed aloud, and pausing for a few moments, added—"Tell him, some o' ye."

The preacher took up the tale. "Hearken unto me, John Crawford," said he. "Ye have reason, this day, to sorrow, and to rejoice, and to be grateful beyond measure. In the morning, ye mocked my counsel and set at nought my reproof; and as ye sowed so have ye reaped. But, as your faither-in-law has told ye, when your face was recognised from the shore, and your name mentioned, a woman screamed—she rushed through the multitude—she plunged into the boiling sea, and in an instant she was beyond the reach of help!"

"Speak!—speak on!" cried the fisherman eagerly; and he placed his hands on his heaving bosom, and gazed anxiously, now towards the preacher, and again towards his Agnes, who wept upon his shoulder.

"The Providence that had till then sustained you, while your fellow creatures perished around you," added the clergyman, "supported her. She reached you—she grasped your arm. After long struggling, she brought you within a few yards of the shore; a wave overwhelmed you both and cast you upon the beach, with her arm—the arm of your wife that saved you—upon your bosom!"

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the fisherman, pressing his wife to his bosom—"my ain Agnes!—was it you?—was it you?—my wife!—my saviour!" And he wept aloud, and his children wept also.

But the feelings of the wife and the mother were too

strong for words. I will not dwell upon the joy and gratitude of the family to whom the husband and the father had been restored as from the dead. It found a sorrowful contrast in the voice of lamentation and of mourning, which echoed along the coast like the peal of an alarm-bell. The dead were laid in heaps upon the beach, and, on the following day, widows, orphans, parents, and brothers, came from all the fishing towns along the coast, to seek their dead amongst the drowned that had been gathered together; or, if they found them not, they wandered along the shore to seek for them where the sea might have cast them forth. Such is the tale of the Sabbath wrecks—of the lost drave of Dunbar.

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